DANIEL AND REVELATION COMMITTEE SERIES

Volume 3

The Seventy Weeks,
Leviticus,
and
the Nature of
Prophecy

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GUIDE TO TRANSLITERATION

The consonants of biblical Hebrew and Aramaic words or phrases are transliterated and printed in italics as follows:

₩ = '

 \neg = \underline{d}

The following list presents the transliteration of the Greek alphabet as used in this volume. No accents are indicated, but a difference is made between long and short vowels. The rough breathing (') is transliterated as h; the smooth breathing (') is not transliterated, since it is not pronounced.

 $A \alpha = A a$

 $\beta \beta = Bb$

 $\Gamma \gamma = G g$

 $\Delta \delta = D d$

 $E \varepsilon = E e$

 $Z\zeta = Zz$

 $H \eta = \bar{E} \bar{e}$

 $\Theta \Theta = Th th$

 $I\iota = Ii$

 $K \kappa = K k$

 $\Lambda \lambda = L l$

 $M \mu = M m$

 $N \nu = N n$

 $\Xi \xi = X x$

O o = O o

 $\Pi \pi = P p$

 $P \rho = R r$

 $\Sigma \sigma = S s$

 $T\tau = Tt$

 $\Upsilon \upsilon = U u$

 $\Phi \varphi = Ph ph$

 $X \chi = Ch ch$

 $\Psi \psi = Ps ps$

 $\Omega \omega = \bar{O} \bar{o}$

= Hh

ABBREVIATIONS

AB Anchor Bible

AJT American Journal of Theology
ASV American Standard Version

AUSS Andrews University Seminary Studies
Ant. Josephus, Antiquities of the Jews

BDB F. Brown, S. R. Driver, and C. A. Briggs, A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament

Bib Biblica

BS Bibliotheca sacra

CHAL A Concise Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament

CHR Catholic Historical Review

COL Christ's Object Lessons

EncJud Encyclopedia Judaica

ExpTim Expository Times

GC The Great Controversy

HAT Handbuch zum Alten Testament HUCA Hebrew Union College Annual

IB Interpreter's Bible

ICC International Critical Commentary
IDB Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible

IEJ Israel Exploration Journal

JAOS Journal of the American Oriental Society

JBL Journal of Biblical Literature

JETS Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society

JSJ Journal of the Study of Judaism

JSOT Journal of the Study of the Old Testament

JSS Journal of Semitic Studies

JTS Journal of Theological Studies

KAT Kommentar zum Alten Testament E. Sellin and W. Rudolph, eds.

KJV King James Version

MB Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing

MLB The Modern Language Bible: The New Berkeley Version in Modern English

MPG Migne Patrologia, Greek MPL Migne Patrologia, Latin

NASB New American Standard Bible

NICOT New International Commentary on the Old Testament

NIV New International Version
 NKZ Neue Kirchliche Zeitschrift
 NTS New Testament Studies
 OTS Oudtestamentische Studien

RB Revue biblique
RevExp Review and Expositor

Selected Messages, book 1

ST Studia Theologica

TDNT Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, Kittel and Friedrich, eds.

TDOT Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament, Botterweck and Ringgren, eds.

TR Theologische Revue
 TT Teologisk Tidsskrift
 VT Vetus Testamentum

VTS Vetus Testamentum, Supplement
WTJ Westminster Theological Journal

ZAW Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft

ZDPV Zeitschrift des deutschen Palastina-Vereins

TO THE READER

With the publishing of The Seventy Weeks, Leviticus, and the Nature of Prophecy as volume 3 in the DRC series, the Committee concludes its present activity on the book of Daniel.

Four in-depth studies in Daniel 9 compose the first division of the volume. Pastors and members who have occasion to meet exponents of the futurist system of prophecy will find chapter 1 particularly helpful. In this essay the chronological interpretations of the four major "schools" of prophetic interpretation are charted, analyzed, and evaluated.

Exegetical studies in Leviticus form the second section. A unique study on the form of Leviticus demonstrates that Moses took pains to underscore the significance of the Day of Atonement in Israel's sanctuary ritual. The structure of Leviticus positions the Day of Atonement at the literary center or apex of the book. Whether confessed sin was transferred to the sanctuary in the daily rituals is addressed in another important essay. A third essay deals with issues related to the contamination and purification of the sanctuary. Altogether these essays provide a scriptural backdrop to the prophecies of Daniel 7–9, especially with respect to the vision in chapter 8 and its focus on the heavenly sanctuary.

Important chapters in the third and last portion of the volume deal with the conditionality principle as it relates to Bible prophecy and the issue of single, dual, or multiple prophetic fulfillments. Two essays explore the theological significance of the preadvent judgment for Christians today. The concluding essay seeks to reconcile the apparent conflict between the Bible's doctrine of justification by faith and its equally clear teaching on judgment according to works.

Like volume 2, this work is also a symposium. While it shares the characteristic unevenness of this approach, the method has enabled the Committee to share with the church the expertise of many. It heartily recommends this third volume on prophetic studies to all students of Bible prophecy.

As a Committee we wish to express our appreciation to chairman Dr. W. Richard Lesher who directed the course of these investigations in the book of Daniel. We especially acknowledge the nine contributors to this third volume:

Ivan T. Blazen Siegfried J. Schwantes

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THE DANIEL AND REVELATION COMMITTEE
GENERAL CONFERENCE OF SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTISTS

EXEGETICAL STUDIES IN DANIEL

Interpretations of the Chronology of the Seventy Weeks Commencement Date of the Seventy Weeks

Exegesis: Daniel 9:24-27

Meaning of kipper

CHAPTER I

Interpretations of the Chronology of the Seventy Weeks

Gerhard F. Hasel

AMILLENNIAL AND DISPENSATIONAL INTERPRETATIONS

Editorial synopsis. There is general agreement among all schools of interpretation that the 70 weeks of Daniel 9:24-27 are not to be construed as literal weeks. Other than amillennial interpreters (who argue for a symbolic approach), most understand the prophecy to deal with a period of 490 years.

Four major interpretations are presently being taught. In this section the author discusses two of them: the symbolic interpretation (adopted by amillennial expositors) and the futurist interpretation (advocated by dispensationalists).

The symbolic interpretation assumes that the numerical figures in Daniel 9:24-27 are to be understood symbolically. That is, they are not to be understood as defining precise periods of time but are to be taken in a representative sense. Thus, the three divisions of the 70 weeks (7, 62, and 1 respectively) are construed to symbolize three periods of time. The first (7 weeks) is taken to represent the period extending from the edict of Cyrus to the first advent of Christ. The second (62 weeks) stands for the era stretching between the first and second advents. Finally, the third division (one week) symbolizes the time of trouble caused by the antichrist and his ultimate defeat.

The author notes six reasons why this approach to the 70 weeks prophecy is unsound. For one thing, there is no biblical basis for the assumption that the numerical data should be taken in this representative sense. Furthermore, the interpretation is inconsistent within itself. The third division, which logically should extend beyond the end point of the second, is made a part of the second division. That is to say, the one week period which involves the antichrist is seen as occurring in the closing portion of the second era. In this manner the prophecy is truncated to 69 weeks instead of 70. Also, whereas the interpretation ends with the troubles created by, and the destruction of, the antichrist, the prophecy itself actually ends with the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple.

In contrast with the symbolic approach the futurist interpretation takes the numbers of this prophecy seriously. However, there is not complete unanimity among the interpreters of this school on some details. The interpretation runs into difficulty by beginning the 70 weeks with the permission given Nehemiah by Artaxerxes I to repair Jerusalem (correctly dated by some dispensationalists to 444 B.C., but dated by most of them to 445 B.C.).

If the first two divisions of 69 weeks (7 + 62) were to be taken as 483 solar years $(69 \times 7 = 483$ —the most natural way to compute these figures), this time period would extend to about A.D. 40. Such a date would be far beyond the lifetime of Christ. Consequently, the dispensationalist expositor assumes that these 483 days are to be understood as "prophetic years" of 360 days each. This assumption gives him a total of 173,880 days $(483 \times 360 = 173,880)$ or 476 solar years plus some days. Thus the attempt is made to shorten the length of the biblical data to fit the actual historical time from Nehemiah to Christ.

One proposal by a prominent interpreter from this school of thought may be summarized. First he notes that the period between 444 B.C. and A.D. 33 (the year date selected for the crucifixion) is a period of 476 years. He then assumes that Artaxerxes granted his permission to Nehemiah on Nisan 1 (March 5), 444 B.C. But 476 full years (March 5, 444 B.C., to March 5, A.D. 33) yields only 173,855 days (476 × 365.24219879 days per solar year). Since he fixes the crucifixion date on April 5, A.D. 33, he must now to add 25 days (25 + 173,855 = 173,880) in order to reach March 30, A.D. 33, which he supposes to be the date for the Saviour's triumphal entry into Jerusalem (six days before the April 5 crucifixion).

One basic problem in the scheme is the assumption that the decree went into effect on Nisan 1 (March 5), 444 B.C. There is no proof for this. Archaeological evidence in favor of the year 444 B.C. has already undercut those futurist charts based on 445 B.C. as a beginning date. Further research may place the 444 B.C. scheme in jeopardy as well. The chronological problems of the futurist interpretation are yet to be resolved.

Common to all dispensationalist analyses of the 70 weeks prophecy is the Gap Theory. This interpretation separates the seventieth or last week from the prophecy and positions it at the end of the age. The era or "parenthesis" that is thus created by splitting the seventieth week from the previous 69 is designated the "Church age." Such a procedure, however, violates the integrity of the prophecy and is without biblical precedent. Altogether the author summarizes ten arguments against the dispensationalist interpretation of the chronology of this prophecy.

Section Outline

- I. Introduction
- II. Symbolical Interpretation (Amillennial)
- III. Futurist Interpretation (Dispensational)

Introduction

The passage of Daniel 9:24–27 is one of the most controversial in the entire OT. It has been stated in 1980 that "in the history of the interpretation of Daniel no other passage has been treated with greater care and with as much controversy as this one." Another writer summed up his assessment by pointing out that "there is no more intricate problem in Old Testament study than the interpretation of Daniel 9:24–27." In concluding his survey of interpretation in 1927 J. A. Montgomery stated, "The history of the exegesis of the 70 weeks is the Dismal Swamp of OT criticism." Although this prophecy is seen as one of the most difficult in the OT, this fact should not cause us to shy away from endeavoring to assess the major attempts to interpret the passage.

Our study is not designed to present major views of pre-Christian times, the patristic period and medieval times, the Reformation period, or the age of the Enlightenment out of which comes the modernistic historical-critical interpretation. It seeks rather to survey major current interpretations, attempting to assess the strong and weak points of each.

In this nearly trackless wilderness of interpretations there is, however, one common denominator. There is virtually unanimous agreement among interpreters of all schools of thought that the phrase "seventy weeks" (šābu'îm šib'îm)⁸ means 490 years. There are two approaches that have been used to derive the position that 490 years are intended by the Hebrew expression šābu'îm šib'îm, literally "weeks seventy."

One approach is to translate the first term $\delta a\underline{b}u^{\hat{i}m}$ as "sevens, besevened, heptads, hepdomads, seven of years" or the like. From this it is suggested that "years" are directly implied in the numerical expression so that an extended translation such as "seventy weeks of years" (RSV) or "seven times seventy weeks" (TEV) are intended. The year-for-a-day principle is thus bypassed. This approach is utilized by the historical-critical school, by the futurist/dispensational school as well as by the amillennialist school.

The second approach translates the term šābu'îm with "weeks" so that the combined expression šābu'îm sib'îm means literally "seventy weeks" (KJV, JB, NEB, NAB, NASB, etc.). The prophetic time period accordingly is derived from the "days" which compose the "seventy weeks" on the basis of the year-for-a-day principle. Thus, the "seventy weeks" are made up of 490 "days" which on the basis of the year-for-a-day principle are 490 years.

A recent investigation into the usage of the term $\S{a}bu\^{i}m$ and its singular form $\S{a}b\^{u}\^{i}a$ concludes, "From both Semitic sources and the LXX it may be concluded, therefore, that the best linguistic evidence currently available supports translating $\S{a}b\^{u}\^{i}a$ [that is, the plural $\S{a}bu\^{i}m$] as 'weeks' in Daniel 9:24–27. This word thus carries the year-day principle along with it in the 70-weeks prophecy."¹⁰

Interpreters agree, even though two different approaches are employed, that the period of 9:24 is 490 years. There is, however, no agreement as to whether this period is to be understood as completely literal, or partially literal and partially symbolic, or totally symbolic. Extreme divergency also exists on the question of the beginning (terminus a quo) and end (terminus ad quem), as well as on the subdivisions of the time period as shall be seen in our discussion below.

Our study in this section and the following one presents the four major schemes of Daniel 9:24-27: the symbolical (amillennialist) scheme, the futurist with its gap theory (dispensationalist) scheme, the historical-critical (modernist) scheme, and finally the historical-messianic (historicist) scheme.

Symbolical Interpretation (Amillennial)

The consistent symbolical interpretation is propounded today primarily by amillennialist interpreters. The key notion rests in the view that the numerical figures in 9:24-27 are not literal but symbolic in nature.

It is suggested that "the very nature of apocalyptic literature would tend toward symbolical interpretation. The numbers 7, 3, and 10 are acknowledged as the principal digits in symbolism." It is claimed that the Hebrew (vs. 24) says

simply "sevens seventy," and not "seventy weeks" (KJV, ERV, NEB, NAB, NASB). The term usually rendered "weeks" is šābu'îm. It carries the meaning "week," according to all major lexicons. 12 However, the LXX and Theodotion, the two oldest Greek versions, render this term "hebdomads." On this basis the sugges-

tion is made that the key phrase δabu im δib im really means "seventy heptads" $-7 \times 7 \times 10$." In short, the "seventy weeks" of 9:24-27 consist of a symbolic figure of "seventy sevens" or "seventy heptads." The typical characteristic of this interpretation is the view that the second of the prophecy (7, 62, 1) extends from the first advent of Christ to the consummation at the end of

time. The "seventy heptads" are not to be understood as an exact chronological computation, but as a "round figure" and "in terms of general seasons of divine activity." However, their beginning is the edict of Cyrus in 538 B.C., which per-

mitted the Jews to return to Jerusalem (2 Chron 36:22-23 = Ezra 1:2-4). Accordingly, the first division of 7 heptads begins in 538 and ends with the first coming of Christ. Online of Christ.

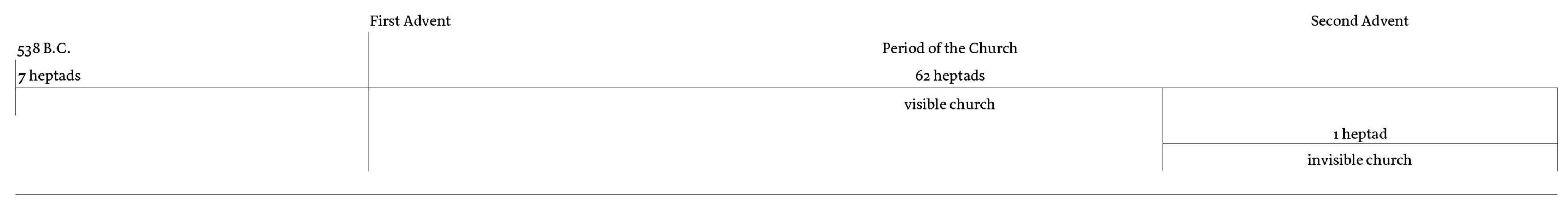
The second division of 62 "heptads" merely indicates a "relatively greater extent than the first construction of Jerusalem, namely "spiritual Jerusalem," or the church, down to

the final consummation at the end of time.¹⁸ The second division is the period of the Christian church in its visible form. E. J. Young suggests, against the supporters of the symbolical interpretation such as T. Kliefoth and C. Keil, that "the 62 sevens therefore have reference to the period which follows the age of Ezra and Nehemiah to the time of Christ." 19

Young wishes to remain tied to history, except in the last part of the seventieth seven, which he believes extends into the future. The third division of one "heptad" is, according to Keil and Leupold, the last period of history, the time of tribulation, which begins with the advent of the antichrist and ends with his defeat. The objective of the destructive work of

the antichrist is "the city and the sanctuary," that is, "the visible aspects of the kingdom of God insofar as they represent the visible institution called the church." The visible church disappears during that last period of history before the second advent of Christ. The following diagram depicts the consistent symbolical interpretation:

Amillennial Arrangement of the Seventy Weeks



The immediate appeal of the consistent symbolical interpretaton is found in its attempt to refuse to engage in any arithematic and time computations. It has also emphasized generalities rather than details in history and interpretation. On the negative side are serious shortcomings. First, there seems to be an internal exegetical problem in the symbolical interpretation. Leupold, for example, speaks of the first period (7 heptads) as extending from Cyrus to the time of Christ's first advent. The second period, which consists of 62 heptads, he extends from the first advent to the Second Advent. This means that the last heptad does not follow the 62 heptads. It is viewed as being contemporaneous with the last part of the second period.²² The text speaks of "seventy sevens" and not of 69 "sevens" plus one "seven" contemporaneous with the last part of the previous division.

Second, there is the matter of whether there is any justification for considering the "seventy sevens" as symbolic in the first place. Just because the term šābu'îm is a masculine plural noun instead of the expected feminine plural (šābu'ôt), which normally stands for "weeks," seems to be an insufficient grammar, the masculine plural ending in šābu'îm, in comparison to the feminine plural ending in šābu'ôt in other parts of the OT, indicates that the singular šăbû'a could take either a masculine or feminine gender form in the plural. 24 This phenomenon is common in many Hebrew nouns of the OT and the Qumran texts as well as in later Mishnaic Hebrew.)

The masculine plural seems to be used by intention, 25 as is the position of this noun before the numeral. The latter appears for the sake of emphasis, in order to contrast the "weeks" with the "years" of Jeremiah (9:2). 26 The notion of a "week" seems to have been suggested implicitly on the basis of the seven-day and seven-year periods culminating in a "Sabbath" (Lev 25:2-4; 26:34ff.).27 The designation of "three weeks" (šelōšāh šābu'îm yāmîm) in 10:2, which reads literally "three sevens [of] days," indicates on the one hand that three regular weeks are meant and seems to imply, on the addition of yāmîm, "days," that these "weeks" are not identical with the šābu îm of 9:24.

Third, the consistent symbolical interpretation with its indefinite short-long-short periods does not do justice to the definite 70-year period of desolation.²⁸ The context (9:2) requires an intentionally definite designation of a period of time measured by the number 7 whose duration must be determined to fit specific chronological time periods of history.

Fourth, the symbolical interpretation cannot find any support in the assertion that the symbolism of numbers such as 7, 3, and 10 is typical of apocalyptic literature and thus tends in that direction. The division of the "seventy sevens"

into three subdivisions of 7, 62, and 1 shows that both the second $(62)^{29}$ and third (l) are rather unsymbolic. Daniel 9:25a is especially formulated as a reference to a particular time. The division of the last "week" into 3 1/2 + 3 1/2 is also totally unsymbolic. Fifth, the symbolical interpretation "errs in having the seventy weeks end with the defeat of the anti-Christ, whereas the Hebrew demands that it be marked by the complete overthrow of Jerusalem." Even if one wished to understand

Jerusalem as a symbol of the visible church and the "sacrifice and oblation" to mean "the totality of the cult" in the sense of "all worship," one would still be faced with a major problem. How can the antichrist bring to a complete end both church and worship when, in fact, the people of the saints receive the eternal kingdom (Dan 7:13-14, 27; 12:1-3)? Sixth, the symbolical interpretation is "liable to the charge of spiritualizing." There is, for example, no exegetical evidence anywhere in the book of Daniel to support the view that Jerusalem should stand for any other entity than the

actual city of Jerusalem. The suggestion that Jerusalem is a symbol of the church is without exegetical and contextual foundation any place in the book of Daniel. The Jerusalem of 9:2 is the literal capital city of the Israelites. The "inhabitants of Jerusalem" in verse 7 are physical Israelites. The "sanctuary" spoken of in verses 16–17 together with

the "city" in verse 18, can mean only the physical city of ancient Israel. Accordingly, the "holy city" of verse 25 cannot refer to anything other than that to which the reader constantly has been pointed.

These weighty objections have drawn few interpreters in recent years to espouse the consistent symbolical interpretation.

Futurist Interpretation (Dispensational)

The futurist/dispensational interpretation³³ of the chronological scheme of 9:24-27 is very widely used today in the English-speaking world and beyond.³⁴ It is often linked with the teachings on prophecy by John Nelson Darby (1800–1882)—from the 1830s on—and the Plymouth Brethren of Ireland. C. I. Scofield (1843–1921) of the United States was influenced by Darby and presented the view of seven dispensations from Eden to the new creation. He incorporated these views in the notes of the widely used Scofield Reference Bible (1911; recent revision, 1967).

It should be noted that the dispensationalist view on eschatology, including 9:24-27, is held extensively today by evangelical Christians. Although these views are of recent origin, their influence is widespread.

The futurist/dispensational interpretation of the time aspects of 9:24-27 is also known as the "parenthesis" or "gap" interpretation. The 490 years are not viewed as continuous. Instead the interpretation posits a "parenthesis" or "gap" between the first 69 weeks and the last or seventieth week of the total span. The last week is to come in the future. In this sense the interpretation is "futurist" in nature.

This futurist/dispensational interpretation understands the "parenthesis" or "gap" as the "Church age." The "Church age. antichrist. According to this view 9:24 is not a summary of what took place in the work of Christ on earth, but is a program of the future. It was not fulfilled in the past. Indeed, 9:24 should be placed at the end of 9:27. Although the dispensational approach claims to be established on the "literal method of interpretation of prophecy,"35 it is unable to keep the 490 years together. It arbitrarily separates the final seven years from its logical time frame and puts them into the future.

The futurist/dispensational interpretation understands the term šābu'îm in 9:24 as "weeks" of years, 36 totaling 490 years. It also understands the "word" (9:25) to build Jerusalem to refer to the second decree of Artaxerxes I Longimanus (Neh 1-2). This decree is dated by most dispensationalists to 445 B.C.³⁷ Based on the reckoning of Sir Robert Anderson who takes the years as "prophetic" years of 360 days each, the first 69 weeks are reckoned as 173,880 days ($69 \times 7 \times 360$ = 173,880).38 This period is extended from "14th March [1st of Nisan], 445 B.C." to "6th April [10th of Nisan], A.D. 32,"39 alleged to be the date for the triumphal entry of Jesus on Palm Sunday.

This reckoning can be held only on five problematical assumptions: (1) The years are not solar years of 360 days. (2) The decree was issued on Nisan 1, 445 B.C. (3) Christ died in A.D. 32. (4) The last week of the prophecy may be moved to the future. (5) No synchronism between "prophetic" and "solar" years can be achieved without the arbitrary and subjective addition of extra days.

On the basis of the problems connected with these five assumptions dispensationalists recently have attempted various adjustments to solve certain major issues. L. Wood suggests that the "best solution" is to accept "the earlier [first] decree of Artaxerxes, given to Ezra in 458 B.C. Figuring on the basis of solar years, the 483-year-period ends now in A.D. 26, and this is the accepted date for Jesus' baptism." R. D. Culver, however, continues to favor the second decree and the date 445 B.C., but is forced to abandon an exact fulfillment, allowing a variance of a few months. 41

R. C. Newman attempts to calculate with the "Sabbath-Year Cycle," the sixty-ninth of which extends from A.D. 27 to 34 and "brackets the crucifixion of Jesus Christ; in fact, it extends over most of His public ministry also." 42

H. W. Hoehner⁴³ points to several problems with this view: First, the first sabbatical cycle extends from 452 to 445 B.C. and thus terminates one year too early to qualify for the year 444 B.C. in which the second decree by Artaxerxes was issued. This would leave only 68 "Sabbath-Year cycles" between the terminus a quo and the death of Christ, but this is contradicted by the 69 weeks after which Messiah is to be cut off (Dan 9:26). Second, since the sixty-ninth "Sabbath-Year cycle" comes to an end in A.D. 34, the Messiah would have to be cut off after A.D. 34, several years after Christ's actual crucifixion.

New evidence not considered by either Newman or Hoehner indicates that the sabbath-year cycle does not extend from 457 to 450 B.C. fits the sabbath-year cycle. Newman's proposal to fix the beginning of the 70 weeks of chapter 9 at the second "decree" of Artaxerxes I (Neh 1-2) on the basis of the sabbath-year cycle has failed.

One of the most recent attempts to solve the calculation problems of the dispensational interpretation is that proposed by H. W. Hoehner, who argues correctly that the date of the second decree of Artaxerxes is 444 B.C. On the basis of the assumption of a "prophetic year" of 360 days, he suggests that the 69 weeks are 173,880 days (69 \times 7 \times 360),45 as does Anderson.46 In Hoehner's calculation the beginning of the 69 weeks is Nisan 1 (March 5), 444 B.C.,47 and the conclusion is on Nisan 10 (March 30), A.D. 33,48 at which time he believes the triumphal entry of Christ occurred.

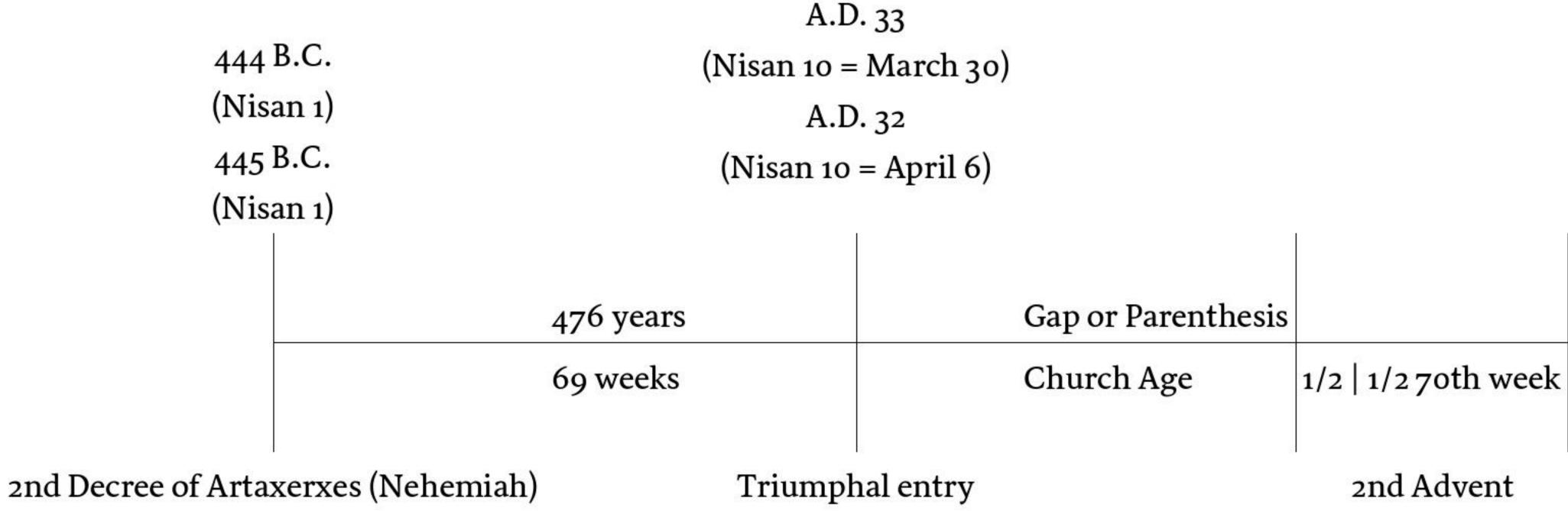
Obviously Hoehner follows Anderson in reckoning the beginning of the 69 weeks as commencing on Nisan 1 when, in fact, Nehemiah 2:1 only states that it was the month of Nisan. Hoehner admits that he works on the basis of an

assumption. 49 He again follows Anderson in multiplying 69 weeks by 7 (years) for each week by 360 days of the assumed "prophetic years" of Anderson, 50 arriving again at the figure of 173,880 days (69 × 7 × 360). Beginning on Nisan 1, 444 B.C. (March 5, 444 B.C.) the 69 weeks conclude on Nisan 10, A.D. 33 (March 30, A.D. 33) according to Hoehner. The "verification" of this chronological scheme is said to be arrived at in the following way: "The difference between 444 B.C. and A.D. 33, then, is 476 solar years. By multiplying 476 [years] by 365.24219879 or by 365 days, 5 hours, 48

minutes, 45.975 seconds, one comes to 173,855.28662404 days or 173,855 days, 6 hours, 52 minutes, 44 seconds."51 Does the "verification" work? Not really, for it does not indicate a mathematical match. It leaves instead a discrepancy of 25 days. They need to be added to the 173,855 days to reach 173,880 days. Hoehner laconically notes, "This leaves only 25 days to be accounted for between 444 B.C. and A.D. 33. By adding the 25 days to [the assumed Nisan 1 or] March 5, one comes to March 30 (of A.D. 33) which was Nisan 10 in A.D. 33. This is the triumphal entry of Jesus into Jerusalem."52 While Hoehner shortens the gap of unaccounted days, he is also unable to overcome the computational problem.

In typical dispensationalist fashion the seventieth week is moved to the future and thus separated from the 69 weeks by the gap of the "Church age." Since Hoehner begins with the only defensible year, 444 B.C., for the decree of his choice, a diagram providing his adjusted dates is here presented (see next page). The dates chosen by most dispensationalists are placed in parentheses:

Dispensationalist Computations of the Seventy Weeks



The dispensational interpretation calls for a consideration of some major problems. First, the year 445 B.C., which is chosen as the beginning (terminus a quo) by the majority of dispensational interpreters, is not acceptable for the year of Artaxerxes' so-called second decree. The data supplied by Nehemiah 1:1 and 2:1 requires that this decree be dated to 444 B.C.⁵³ Therefore, Anderson's calculation cannot be salvaged. It should be noted also that this computation is off by

several days because he disregards the difference between the Julian and Gregorian calendars. 54 But this might not prove a major obstacle since, to make his system work, he has already supplied 130 days for which no accounting is given. Second, the calculations based on both Anderson's⁵⁵ and Hoehner's⁵⁶ systems are built on the assumption, as noted above, that the decree of Nehemiah 2:1 was issued on Nisan 1. Fellow-dispensationalist Newman criticized Anderson as follows: "But for him to start even a week later would make it impossible to end the prophetic years' and the year A.D. 32." The same applies to Hoehner. If he begins only five days later, his whole calculation breaks down. Nehemiah 2:1 merely speaks of "the month of Nisan" without specifying the precise day on which the decree was issued. That Nisan 1 was the date for the issuing of the decree is

purely hypothetical. It lacks historical support and is necessitated only because the scheme needs more days than are possible to obtain. Third, the 69 weeks are taken to be "prophetic years" of 360 days. However, this computation gives a total of only 476 solar years and a few days, in other words, seven years less than the expected 483 years. If one calculates on the basis of 483 solar years ($69 \times 7 = 483$) and begins with 444 B.C., one misses the target date of the lifetime of Christ by several years. He arrives at A.D. 40, some years after the crucifixion of Christ. The solar-year calculation, which appears to

be the most normal, does not work in this scheme, so it is rejected by most dispensationalists in favor of the "prophetic year" calculation. If one should grant, for the sake of argument, the validity of the "prophetic year" method and should extend from Nisan 1 (March 5), 444 B.C., 173,855 days (476 years x 365.24219879 days),59 one would arrive only at March 5, A.D. 33. This is still 25 days short of the triumphal entry, which was reckoned to fall on March 30 of the same year. It is 31 days (more than one "prophetic month"!) short of the crucifixion date, which would fall on April 5, A.D. 33, according to

Hoehner's chronology of the life of Christ. 60 It is apparent that Hoehner does not resolve Anderson's dilemma. There is no way in which a synchronism between the 173,880 "prophetic days" (69 weeks × 7 years between 444 B.C. and A.D. 33 (or 173,855 "solar days") can be achieved. For Anderson the discrepancy consists of 116 days added for leap years and 24 extra days—a total of 140 days—in order to arrive at the supposed triumphal entry on April 6, A.D. 32. 61 Hoehner's discrepancy in his attempted synchronism consists of 25 days that he needs

to get to the supposed triumphal entry on March 30, A.D. 33.62 Hoehner admits, "it is obvious that a calculation using the solar year does not work "63 with a beginning in 444 B.C. To this one must add that it is equally obvious that a calculation using the "prophetic year" does not work either, unless missing days are supplied arbitrarily. But such a subjective procedure runs counter to the obvious precision of 9:24-27.

Fourth, interpreters of the futurist/dispensational school calculate the 70 weeks on the basis of what Anderson called "prophetic years" of 360 days each as noted above. 64 This is necessitated on account of the fact that the period of time

from 444 B.C. to the target date in Christ's lifetime, if reckoned by normal (solar) years is too short by almost 10 years. While the 360-day lunar year was known in ancient Egypt, Assyria, and Babylon, using a system of 12 months with 30 days each, it is of vital importance to recognize that various devices were employed in these nations to bring about an approximation to the 365 1/4 days of the solar year. Either five days were added every six or seven years, or the needed extra days to reach the 365 1/4 days were supplied by varying methods. 65

Anderson also attempted to support the "prophetic year" scheme by supposing that the ancient Egyptian used a 360-day year. G. C. Gleason points out, however, that "as for Egypt, the 365-day year was followed, ... the Egyptians never used a 360-day year, as Anderson supposed; they simply used the fraction 1/360 as a rough estimate for daily quotas."66

No ancient nation is known to have employed a 360-day year in complete disregard for the solar cycle of 365 1/4 days. Regarding ancient Israel, the "numerous chronological statements in Kings and Chronicles, [reveal that] the OT authors used nothing but true solar years. This consideration alone ought to be decisive against Anderson's theory [of 'prophetic years' of 360 days]." 67

Fifth, dispensational writers who suggest 445 or 444 B.C. as the beginning point for the death of Christ in A.D. 32 or 33, respectively. These late dates lead to a host of problems for NT chronology, which is interlaced with the secular chronology of the period in which Christ's death will come up for discussion again, it may suffice to state here that these two dates are off by one and two years, respectively.

Sixth, the dispensational interpretation—the Parenthesis Theory (Gap Theory)—claims that there is a large interval of time between the 69 weeks and the seventieth week of the total 70 weeks prophecy. Since there is no gap between the first seven weeks and the following 62 weeks (the first and second divisions of the total period), it comes as a surprise to find an extraordinarily long gap posited to exist between the second and the third divisions (the last or seventieth week of the prophecy). This lengthy gap, or parenthesis, breaks the natural continuity of the prophecy (7 + 62 + [gap] 1). Vitringa cautioned long ago "that the period of seventy hebdomads, or 490 years, is here predicted as one that will continue uninterrupted from its commencement to its close or completion, both with regard to the entire period of

seventy hebdomads, and also to the several parts (7, 62, and 1), into which the seventy are divided." And the question has been raised, "How can one imagine that there is an interval between the sixty-nine and the one, when these together make up the seventy?"68 Why is the last week placed in the future? If Christ were to be crucified in the fall of A.D. 36, a date totally impossible. Another reason for placing the last week into the future is the

attempt to escape the difficult fact that Jerusalem's destruction did not fall within this one week of years. In other words, futurist/dispensational interpreters seek to establish their interpretation by comparing prophecy with its fulfillment and not by an impartial exegesis of the text. We agree with E. J. Young that this "question must finally be resolved upon the basis of exegesis alone." 69

Seventh, it has been suggested by H. A. Ironside and A. J. McClain, among others, or parentheses, in biblical prophecy. On this basis it is argued that the alleged parenthesis of 9:27 finds its justification. On close examination, however, it may be seen that the texts do not support their contention unless one superimposes a dispensational scheme from the outside. 71 But even if the passages to which dispensationalist writers appeal did contain gaps, this would still be no proof that there was a similar gap, or parenthesis, in 9:24-27.

In this connection the observation of P. Mauro is significant because he has shown that there is "an absolute rule, admitting of no exceptions, [namely] that when a definite measure of time or space is specified by the number of units composing it, within which a certain event is to happen or a certain thing is to be found, the units of time or space which make up that measure are to be understood as running continuously and successively."72

This is based on the observation that the 430 years of Genesis 15:13, Exodus 12:40, Galatians 3:17; the 40 years of plenty and of famine of Genesis 45:6 were respectively

consecutive years. The three days after which Jesus was to arise were also to be consecutive, the natural thing would be to expect the 70 weeks of 9:24-27 likewise to be 70 consecutive weeks. Eighth, the argument that the events of verse 26 rests upon an unsupportable assumption. It is true that the events of verse 26, namely the cutting off of the Messiah and the destruction of both city and sanctuary, are said to take place after the 62 weeks, but it is not stated that the events of verse 26.73 There is no contextual evidence whatsoever to support the hypothesis that verses 26-27 are to be understood in any

other sense than as contemporaneous events. Detailed exegesis indicates that verse 27 presents a major stumbling block to the interpretation of dispensationalists. This is true because verse 27 is an explanation of verse 26 and cannot be separated from it and assigned to events subsequent to it.74 Ninth, another serious problem concerns the assumption of an unprecedented covenant-making by antichirst. 75 The OT (and the NT) "contains no hint of any such covenant at all, let alone some earlier one that he could confirm at this point in Dan. 9."76 The difficulty with this assumption is that it takes a lesser figure, namely "the prince that shall come" (vs. 26), as the antecedent of the "he" in verse 27, rather than the dominant figure, the "Messiah" (vs. 26). The word

"prince" is a subordinate figure in verse 26. It is not even the subject of the clause. The selone, the fitting grammatical antecedent of the "he" (vs. 27) is the "Messiah" (vs. 26). Tenth, the futurist interpreters transform the "prince" into "a future deputy of the people of Israel." and a "future enemy of the people of Israel." and a "future enemy of the people of Israel." and a "future enemy of the people of Israel." upon the "people of the prince." Young points out, "This prince, therefore, must be one who rules over these people, ... he must be their contemporary, alive when they are alive." A prince living 1900 years later than the people is quite contrary to the text. L. Wood replies that the phrase "the one coming" means "from whom will come." This makes the entire phrase read "the people from whom will come." This makes the entire phrase read "the people from whom will come." This makes the entire phrase "the one coming" means "from whom will come." This makes the entire phrase read "the people from whom will come." This makes the entire phrase "the one coming" means "from whom will come." This makes the entire phrase "the one coming" means "from whom will come." This makes the entire phrase "the one coming" means "from whom will come." This makes the entire phrase "the one coming" means "from whom will come." This makes the entire phrase "the one coming" means "from whom will come." This makes the entire phrase "the one coming" means "from whom will come." This makes the entire phrase "the one coming" means "from whom will come." This makes the entire phrase "the one coming" means "from whom will come." This makes the entire phrase "the one coming" means "from whom will come." This makes the entire phrase "the one coming" means "from whom will come." This makes the entire phrase "the one coming" means "from whom will come." This makes the entire phrase "the one coming" means "from whom will come." This makes the entire phrase "the one coming" means "from whom will come." This makes the entire phrase "the one coming" means "from whom will come." This makes the entire phrase "the one coming" means "from whom will come." This makes the entire phrase "the one coming" means "from whom will come." This makes the entire phrase "the one coming" means "from whom will come." This makes the entire phrase "the one coming" means "from whom will come a prince."

Eleventh, recent study of the poetry of 9:24-27 indicates a very intricate literary structure. 81 Such a structure binds the entire section together in literary patterns that do not permit the kind of chronological fragmentation demanded by the dispensational system. The literary arrangement supports the idea that the three titles—Messiah (vs. 26a), and the Prince (vs. 26b)—refer to the same person who is cut off in the middle of the last week. 82

These chronological, historical, and exegetical obstacles to the acceptance of the futurist/dispensational interpretation of 9:24-27 hardly commend this approach.

Hebrew text.

HISTORICAL-CRITICAL AND HISTORICIST INTERPRETATIONS

Editorial synopsis. Expositions of the historical-critical interpretation of Daniel 9:24-27 by liberal scholars do not recognize any messianic import in this passage. It is assumed that its setting is the pre-Christian, Maccabean age (second century B.C.). Furthermore, it is presupposed that the material was written in the form of a prophecy *after* the events had taken place. The historical-critical interpretation is widespread and is the standard view of modern liberal scholarship.

It is asserted that the 70 weeks (that is, 70 weeks of years) form an interpretation of the 70-year-captivity prophecy of Jeremiah, referred to in the same chapter (9:2; cf. Jer 25:1, 12). Consequently historical-critical interpreters begin the 490 years with the fall of Jerusalem in 587 or 586 B.C. The first division (the seven weeks) of the three parts of the total period is extended to 539 B.C. (the fall of Babylon) or by others to 538 B.C. (the decree of Cyrus regarding the return of the Jews and the building of the temple).

The second division (62 weeks) is extended from either 539 or 538 B.C. to the murder of the high priest Onias III in either 171 or 170 B.C. The third division (one week) is laid out from the death of Onias to 164 B.C., the year the temple was rededicated by Judas Maccabeus. The desecration of the temple by Antiochus IV is placed three years earlier at 167 B.C.

Since it is the firm belief of this school of interpretation that 9:24-27 is just history written down after the events in the form of prophecy, its data should dovetail with actual history. But this is not the case. A variety of problems are encountered by this approach.

There is no unanimity on the starting point of the first division (7 weeks = 49 years). One of the most recent writers suggests 589 B.C. to 536 B.C. (a period of 53 years!). Others suggest 587 to 539 B.C. (the fall of Jerusalem to the fall of Jerusalem to the decree of Cyrus to release the Jews). Actually only this latter sequence gives a true 49 years. New evidence now supports the date of 586 B.C. for the fall of Jerusalem and 537 B.C. for the decree of Cyrus.

However, the fall of Jerusalem as the beginning date for the 490 years has no support exegetically. Whereas "the word of the Lord" to Jeremiah (9:2) pertains to the 70 year captivity and indirectly to the fall of the city and nation, Daniel 9:25 refers to a "word" calling for the restoration and rebuilding of Jerusalem. Thus, it is self-evident that the 490 years were never intended to begin with the destruction of the city.

Another glaring weakness in the historical-critical scheme lies in the plotting of the 62 weeks or 434 years, the second division of the 490 year period. The selected span—from 539/538 B.C. to 171/170 B.C.—is nearly seven decades too short. The 434 years extend far beyond the intended termination at the death of Onias. In order to solve this discrepancy some expositors begin the 62 weeks or 434 years with the date 605 B.C. and run the second division concurrently with the seven weeks or 49 years that started from 587 B.C. This gives the anomaly of providing two different beginning dates for the passage. Other expositors simply dismiss the matter as a computational error on the part of the writer or as due to the vague and faulty memory of the Jews in the second century B.C.

Chronological problems likewise beset the dating of the last week from the death of Onias to the rededication of the temple in 164 B.C. New evidence now places the death of the priest at 170 B.C. which throws off the computation of those scholars who located the 434 years in the span between 605 B.C. and 171 B.C. and shortens the last "week" of the prophecy as well.

The computation of the years in which the temple was desecrated by Antiochus, a period of three years (December 14, 167 B.C., to December 14, 164 B.C.) is also out of harmony with the prophecy which calls for an event to happen in the midst of the week, implying three and one-half years on either side. The fact that new research now argues for the desecration of the temple in 168 B.C. with a renewal in 165 B.C. only complicates the chronology of this period for the historical-critical interpretation. At present there is no historical-critical scheme of chronological interpretation that can harmonize 9:24–27 with actual history.

Jews (in pre-Christian times) as well as Christians have acknowledged the messianic and predictive intent of Daniel 9:24-27. The majority of Christian expositors have followed the historical-messianic interpretation of this passage. It is the only scheme that can claim correlation and agreement with prophecy and history by its extension of the 490 years from 457 B.C. to A.D. 34.

The beginning date for the 490 years is the seventh year of Artaxerxes I, now firmly established as 458/457 B.C. With Ezra returning to Palestine in 457 B.C. the prophecy finds its logical beginning with that year date. Rejecting the biased and late Masoretic (A.D. 500 and onward) punctuation of 9:25 in favor of that found in the earlier Greek and other versions, the interpreter of this school traces the 69 weeks or 483 years (the first two divisions: 7 + 62 weeks) on the year-day principle to A.D. 27.

In A.D. 27 the baptism of Jesus occurred—noted by Luke as the fifteenth year of the Roman emperior Tiberius (Luke 3:5)—and He began His ministry as the Messiah. Three and one-half years later, "in the midst of the week" (the spring of A.D. 31), He was crucified. The prophecy closes three and one-half years later in A.D. 34 with the death of Stephen, the scattering of the Christians from Jerusalem, and with the gospel going to the Gentiles. It is also possible that A.D. 34 marked the conversion of Paul.

The author examines major arguments raised against the historical-messianic interpretation. For example, it is argued that the decree of Artaxerxes I to Ezra does not refer to a rebuilding and restoration of Jerusalem. It may, however, be inferred that the Jews understood such to be the king's intention. The biblical evidence is that the wall and other aspects of the city were largely constructed by Ezra (Ezra 4:7–23; 9:9). The fact that Nehemiah's building program was accomplished in only 52 days (Neh 6:15) is mute evidence that the bulk of the rebuilding already had been done before Nehemiah's arrival.

The argument that Ezra came to Palestine after Nehemiah does not appear to be tenable. Masoretic punctuation that would prevent the span of 69 weeks (7 + 62) is not original with the Hebrew text and shows its Jewish bias. It cannot be used as an argument against the messianic focus of this prophecy.

Some also argue that the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple (mentioned in the prophecy) requires a termination in A.D. 70 rather than in A.D. 34. However, that may be countered with the fact that it is the death of the Messiah (predicted within the prophecy) that sealed the fate of the ceremonial system as well as of the national state. The events of A.D. 70 are simply the subsequent external consequences of the advent and death of the Messiah, the chief foci of the prophecy.

While objections can be made to all four of the major interpretations of Daniel 9:24-27, the historical-messianic interpretation does not appear to be subject to the chronological, exegetical, and historical difficulties encountered by the other systems. It thus recommends itself as the most adequate of the major interpretations.

Section Outline

- I. Historical-Critical Interpretations (Modernist)
- II. Historical-Messianic Interpretation (Historicist)

Historical-Critical Interpretations

The historical-critical interpretations of modern times are the most widely employed chronological schemes. They reflect a date for the book of Daniel in the second century B.C. That is, the historical-critical school of interpretation holds that the final form of Daniel was written between 168/7 and 164/3 B.C.

The historical-critical school of interpretation does not recognize the Messiah in 9:24-27. Furthermore, it "was introduced," writes the historical-critic J. A. Montgomery, "by the Deists and Rationalists of the 17th and 18th centuries, with the premise that the objective of the 70 Weeks is the Maccabean age and that the 'prophecy' is accordingly a *vaticinium ex eventu*." In other words, the passage was no prophecy at all, but was written in the form of a prophecy after the events described had taken place.

The historical-critical school of interpretation developed in the Age of the Enlightenment and was first adopted by two Englishmen. In 1697 John Marsham² and in 1726 Anthony Collins³ embraced the suggestion of the pagan Neoplatonist philosopher, Porphyry (third century A.D.), that Daniel's prophecies were written after the events and actually describe the times of Antiochus IV Epiphanes.⁴ The historical-critical interpretation of Daniel 9:24–27 became and is today the standard view of liberal scholars throughout the world.

Since this school of thought presupposes a second century B.C. composition of Daniel and denies the presence of genuine prophecy, 9:24-27 is likewise treated as a vaticinium ex eventu. This position holds that "the prophecies of Daniel were vaticinia ex eventu, prophecies-after-the-event, and were used as a device by which to ensure authority for an apocalyptic message."

The "seventy weeks" of 9:24 are considered as "seventy weeks of years." They are regarded as a "secondary interpretation of Jeremiah's prophecy" referred to in 9:2. This "inspired' reinterpretation" supposedly "shows the way in which the prophetic books were read at the time [of Antiochus Epiphanes]." However that may be, the historical-critical school reads the "seventy weeks" as "seventy weeks of years," extending for most critics from 587/586 B.C. to 164 B.C.

The beginning of the "seventy weeks of years" or 490 years in this scheme is the fall of Jerusalem which is dated either to 587 B.C. 12 or to 586 B.C. 13 The "seven weeks" of years, or 49 years (the first division of the 70 weeks), if reckoned from 587 B.C. conclude in 539 B.C. In that case, writes N. W. Porteous, "it was almost exactly 49 years (7×7) between the fall of Jerusalem and the fall of Babylon." 14

J. A. Montgomery, on the other hand, begins with the date 586 B.C. for the fall of Jerusalem, and figures the 49 years to terminate in 538 B.C. S. K. Koch notes with insight, "If the 49 years of the first part of the period are reckoned from 586 to the decree of Cyrus in 538 (Ezr 1), then they prove to be absolutely exact." While the arithmetic is exact, the events that are to take place after the 49 years are certainly not so.

Montgomery himself points this out: "In this case it must be admitted that the dating [of 586 B.C.] is not exactly 'from the issue of the word,' i.e. the word of Jer. 25:2 [1] in year one of Nebuchadnezzar." (Actually 586 B.C., the fall of Jerusalem was the nineteenth year of Nebuchadnezzar. See Jeremiah 52:12). The first year of Nebuchadnezzar is 605 B.C. We shall see below that a few historical-critics attempted to begin with this date (or 604 B.C.) and then figure the 70 year prophecy of Jeremiah 25:1–11 and the 490 years of Daniel 9:24–27 to be concurrent rather than consecutive, 18 a hypothesis without textual support.

In view of these problems O. Plöger suggests that the starting point of the total period is "the issue of the word" that Jeremiah has spoken, namely 587 B.C., but points out right away that this date is to be chosen "no matter when the words of Jeremiah in Jer. 25 and 29 were spoken." This qualifier does not solve the problem of the date for the beginning (terminus a quo), as will be shown below.

The 62 weeks, or 434 years, of the middle period (or second division of the 70 weeks) is said to begin with the fall of Babylon in 539 B.C., or Cyrus' decree in 538 B.C., and is said to terminate with the death of the high priest Onias III in 171 or 170 B.C., respectively. The grave difficulty with this computation rests in the fact that the period from 539/538 B.C. to 171/170 B.C. is too short by almost seven decades.

The final division of "one week," or 7 years, is reckoned from the death of Onias III in 171/170 B.C. to the rededication of the temple by Judas Maccabaeus in 164 B.C. The middle of the last week is marked by the desecration of the temple by Antiochus IV Epiphanes, which continued for three and one-half years from "the end of 168 to the beginning of 164...." Having briefly sketched the standard historical-critical interpretation, we may represent it by the following diagram:

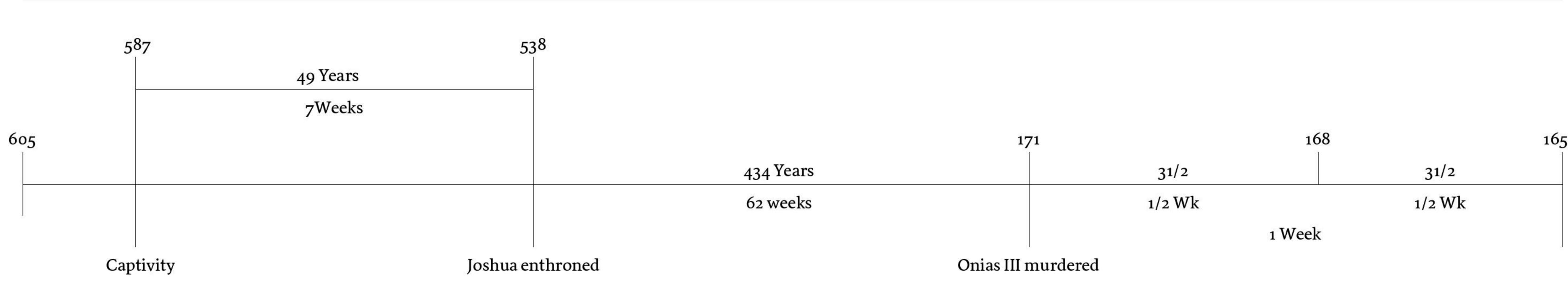
Standard Historical-Critical Computation of the Seventy Weeks



Some have also attempted to solve the problem that the scheme is too short (in the middle division) by several decades. A. Lacocque is a recent interpreter who suggests again that the first "seven weeks" are *concurrent* with the 62 weeks. He states, "Of the seventy weeks (*sic*) from Jeremiah's oracle, seven have passed from the beginning of the Captivity (587) to the enthronement of the High Priest Joshua (538; see Hag. 1:1, 14; Zech. 3:1ff.). Sixty-two more weeks, or 434 years, correspond to the lapse of time between 605, the date of the oracle in Jer. 25:1, 11, and 171, the year of the murder of the second 'anointed one', the High Priest Onias III. Of the last week, half of it passed, it encompassed the time between the death of Onias III and Antiochus' coercive measures. A half week more (from 168 to 165), and 'the decreed destruction will be poured out by the destroyer.' "23

Lacocque's chronological scheme may be represented by the following diagram:

Lacocque's Variation on the Historical-Critical Computation of the Seventy Weeks



The advantage of Lacocque's scheme is that there are exactly 434 years between 605 B.C. and 171 B.C.²⁴ Among the insurmountable problems are the following:

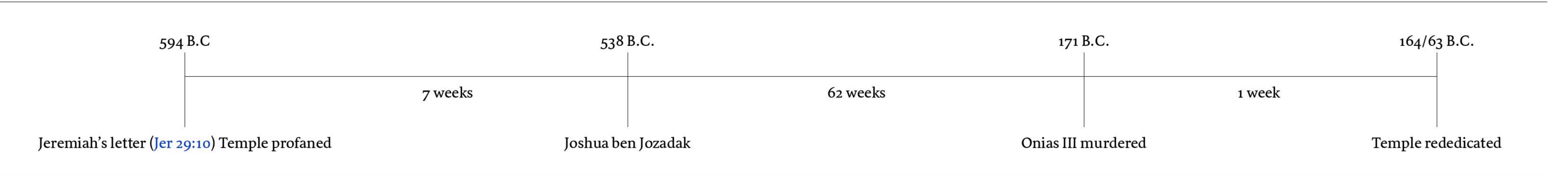
- 1. The wording of 9:25 demands that from "the word to restore and rebuild Jerusalem" until Messiah the Prince "there will be seven and sixty-two weeks," that is, 69 weeks and not just 62 weeks.
- 2. The concurrent reckoning of the seven weeks within the 62 weeks destroys any possibility of ever having a total of 70 weeks or 490 years.
- 3. Lacocque actually has two different beginning dates, namely 605 B.C. for the 62 weeks (434 years) and 587 B.C. for the seven weeks (49 years) which do not correlate. Since the 49 years remain outside of the reckoning of the total period of time, his computational system reduces the 70 week "prophecy" to a 63 week prophecy in sequential reckoning.

On the basis of very recent computations the year of the death of Onias III is now placed at 170 B.C. and not 171 B.C.²⁵ If this is correct, the 434 years reckoned from 605 B.C. do not come out correctly. This scheme hardly recommends itself on the basis of its computational and exegetical problems.

Another historical-critical computation of the 70 weeks is that provided by L. F. Hartman and A. A. Di Lella in the Anchor Bible Commentary. It is suggested that "the whole period, which he [the author of Daniel 9] counts as beginning with 'the utterance of the word regarding the rebuilding of Jerusalem,' [9:25] i.e. as beginning with 594 B.C., and [it is] ending with the death of Epiphanes in 164 B.C., …"²⁶

"The first part of the 490-year period almost certainly refers to the time that ended with the return of the first exiles from Babylonia to Jerusalem in 538 B.C." The longest section of the 490-year period reaches from 538 B.C. "to the next mentioned event, when 'an anointed one' was 'cut down' in 171 B.C., ..." The events of the supposed death of Onias III in 171 B.C. down to 164 B.C. as the end of the 490-year period follows the customary historical-critical scheme. 29

The Hartman-Di Lella chronological scheme may be represented by the following diagram:



The major difference of the Hartman-Di Lella chronological schema with the standard historical-critical computation is its beginning date in 594 B.C. This is another attempt to correlate the text of Daniel 9:25, which specifies that from the "going forth of a word [or decree] to rebuild and restore Jerusalem," with the beginning date of the 490-year period. Hartman and Di Lella correctly point out that a beginning date of 605 B.C. (or 606 B.C.) will not work because Jeremiah 25:11–12 "does not really speak of the rebuilding of Jerusalem at all." There is likewise no "word" or "decree" datable to 587/586 B.C., the year of the destruction of Jerusalem that speaks of a rebuilding of Jerusalem.

Hartman and Di Lella attempt to be faithful to the text of Daniel 9:25 which speaks clearly about a "word" to rebuild Jerusalem and suggest that it is found in Jeremiah 29:10 which states that when the 70-year captivity is completed, "I will visit you and fulfill my good word to you, to bring you back to this place." Regardless whether this prophecy was spoken in 594 B.C., as is suggested by Hartman and Di Lella, the passage in Jeremiah 29:10 does not fit Daniel 9:25. The former speaks of bringing back exiles to Judah, but Daniel 9:25 speaks of a "word to rebuild and restore Jerusalem."

This difficulty is accented in the decree of Cyrus (Ezra 1:2-4) of 538/537 B.C. which speaks of the rebuilding of the temple (vs. 3) but not of the rebuilding of Jerusalem which did not take place until the "word" went forth from Artax-

erxes in 457 B.C. (Ezra 7:12-26).³¹ These problems indicate that the year 594 B.C. does not fit as the beginning of the 490-year period on exegetical grounds.

Second, the date 594 B.C. does not fit as the beginning date on chronological and computational grounds. The first section of the 70-week period, which is 49 years, is too short by eight years to reach to 538 B.C. Seven weeks of 49

Hartman and Di Lella are aware of this discrepancy and attempt to cover up this computational problem by suggesting that the interval of 56 years between 594 B.C. and 538 B.C. is "sufficiently close to the quasi-artificial figure of 'seven weeks' of years (Dan 9:25)."³² However, there is no evidence that the seven-week period of 49 years is "quasi-artificial," particularly since the text of Daniel 9:25 demands a specific fulfillment regarding the restoration and rebuilding of Jerusalem at the end of that period.

Third, the period from 594 B.C. to 164 B.C. is only 430 years, or 50 years too short to cover the 70-week period of 490 years. Hartman and Di Lella recognize this discrepancy,³³ but note that even if one begins with 605 B.C. "the whole period would be only 441 years"³⁴ to reach down to 164 B.C. The implication is that the standard historical-critical scheme (see above) has a computational problem as does the scheme presented by them.

In either case, 490 years can never be reached by any historical-critical (modernistic) scheme. Hartman and Di Lella note incisively that the 62-week period of 434 years which reaches from 538 B.C. to 171 B.C. "amount to only 367 years." Again the computation is incorrect and throws serious doubt on the entire historical-critical interpretation.

Fourth, Hartman and Di Lella suggest that "the anointed leader" of Daniel 9:25 (that is, "Messiah the Prince") is identified best with Joshua ben Jozadak, the first high priest of the restored temple in Jerusalem and not with Cyrus or with Zerubbabel as other exegetes of the historical-critical school have maintained.³⁶ Again Hartman and Di Lella are attempting to build on the text of Daniel 9:25.

But the designation "Messiah the Prince" (Heb. māṣĩaḥ nāgîḏ) is rendered simply and incorrectly as "the anointed leader" by Hartman and Di Lella. If this designation would mean "the anointed leader," the Hebrew would have to be nāgîḍ māṣṣĩaḥ and not the sequence the text has.³⁷ Furthermore, there is no evidence in Ezra 2:2, 36 or in Nehemiah 7:7, 39 that this Joshua (or Jeshua) was the first high priest since he and his brothers are simply called "priests" (Ezra 3:2, 8, 10; 4:2–3; 5:2). The temple was not completed until 515 B.C. and no high priest was needed until that time.

Finally, the priest Joshua ben Jozadak does not fulfill the time specification of Daniel 9:26 with the seven-week period or 49 years, because from 594 B.C. to 537 B.C., when he appears in history, a period of 57 years has elapsed, but it should have been only 49 years.

One of the most widely published writers on the book of Daniel since the 1970s is John J. Collins. In his 1981 commentary on Daniel³⁸ the standard view of historical-critical scholars is more or less adopted but no dates are supplied. Collins raises an issue that is not usually addressed, namely, "the question of truth arises. The prophecy of the seventy weeks of years cannot be reconciled with historical fact."³⁹

In his view the point of departure is "the reign of the unhistorical Darius the Mede,"⁴⁰ that is, 539/538 B.C.⁴¹ This view is not held by any other scholar of this school of interpretation. But whether it is this point of departure or the one in 605 B.C. (606 B.C.), 594 B.C., or 587/586 B.C., it can in no case be reconciled.

Another problem pointed to by Collins is the fact that "the time from the profanation of the Temple by the Syrians [that is, by Antiochus IV Epiphanes] to its purifications by the Maccabees was exactly three years, not three and a half (see 1 Maccabees 4:54; 2 Maccabees 10:3-5)."⁴² The time elements and calculations contain errors but the truth communicated is that suffering does come to an end for the persecuted Jews.⁴³

Maybe the historical-critical schemes are too problematical to fit the text and there are no errors in the prophecy. Before we attempt to present another historical-consecutive scheme we need to analyze other facets of the standard historical-critical interpretation because the alternative schemes of Lacocque and Hartman-Di Lella fit neither history nor the text.

Let us turn our attention now to the sequential reckoning of the 490 years in the view of the standard historical-critical scheme of our time, that is, those who begin actually in standard fashion with 587/586 B.C. as our first diagram above indicated. Let us begin by considering the first of the three time divisions.

One would rightly expect that a "prophecy" written after the fact would fit the figures of 49 + 434 + 7 years (7 weeks + 62 weeks + 1 week) perfectly. However, this is not the case. The beginning of 587/586 (namely the fall of Jerusalem) for the first division of the 490 years runs into a twofold problem:

- 1. Exegetically the first division of 49 years begins with the "issue of the word" (9:25), which is taken to refer to the word issued to Jeremiah as mentioned in 9:2, and therefore must have reference to the *fall* of Jerusalem.⁴⁴ However, 9:25 clearly specifies that the object of "the word" is "to *restore* and to rebuild Jerusalem." The word concerning the 70 year period of the desolation of Jerusalem (9:2; Jer 25:12; 29:10) cannot possibly be regarded as "the word to restore and to rebuild Jerusalem." The word concerning the 70 year period of the desolation of Jerusalem (9:2; Jer 25:12; 29:10) cannot possibly be regarded as "the word to restore and to rebuild Jerusalem."
- D. S. Russell makes the bold suggestion, "At that time [fall of Jerusalem] the promise was given that God would bring back the captives and rebuild the ruined city (cf. Jer 30:18; 31:38–40)."48 However, the two passages cited from Jeremiah do not belong to the time of the fall of Jerusalem. They are dated early in the ministry of Jeremiah, indeed several decades before the fall of Jerusalem. Furthermore, the two passages from Jeremiah 30 and 31 contain "nothing whatever of a period of time, and in this verse [9:25] before us there is no reference to this prophecy."50

In any case the angel Gabriel refers to "the word to restore and to rebuild Jerusalem" as the beginning point for the entire 490 year period, and can therefore only be pointing to a word whose going forth is specifically "determined." In short, the fall of Jerusalem has exegetically no support as the beginning for the 490 years.

2. There is also a computational problem connected with the first division of 49 years. One of the recent commentaries on Daniel, the one by M. Delcor, suggests that the first division of 49 years extends from 589 B.C. to 536 B.C., a period extending 53 years. This calculation is off by more years than the suggestion of 587 B.C. or 586 B.C. for the fall of Jerusalem as the beginning date of the first division and 539 B.C. for the fall of Babylon, or 538 B.C. for the decree of Cyrus, as the beginning date for the second division of the 70 weeks. The only figures that could be considered exact is the sequence of 587 B.C. to 538 B.C.. All other suggestions are only "circa 49 years," as pointed out correctly by Montgomery.

The date of 538 B.C. for the decree of Cyrus is suggested 53 constantly although the year 537 B.C. is actually a date better supported by new evidence. It is also to be noted that the destruction of Jerusalem did not take place in 587 B.C., but in 586 B.C. as new evidence seems to support. 54 If this is so, the only possibility of an exact computation of the 49 years is ruled out, unless the year 537 B.C. is accepted by these interpreters for the date of Cyrus' decree.

This means that scholars supporting the historical-critical interpretation cannot avoid the fact that the first division of the 490 years fits the suggested dates only approximately. Whether or not this does justice to the specific designation of 49 years, each person has to decide for him/herself.

We turn now to the second time division. The acknowledged major problem of the historical-critical interpretation relates to the second division of the 70 weeks prophecy, namely the 434 year period (62×7) . This division is said to begin in 539 B.C. or 538 B.C. and to terminate in 171 B.C. or 170 B.C. respectively. It is thus too short by about 67 years. This crucial issue has received attention by scholars supporting the interpretation under discussion. A variety of suggestions have been presented for its solution.

G. Behrmann (similarly by A. Lacocque as noted above) has suggested that the beginning date of the 62 weeks, or 434 years, is the first year of Nebuchadnezzar, or 605 B.C. 55 (a date now confirmed by new evidence). This date he urged on the ground that 605 B.C. was the date of the commencement of the 70 years of exile in Jeremiah 25:1, 11. It was then argued that 605 B.C. less "seven weeks," or 49 years, would bring us down to approximately the accession of Cyrus (about 559 B.C.). This would make Cyrus "the Anointed, the Prince" (9:25). 57

The date of 605 B.C. as the beginning date of the 434 years (62 weeks) has found supporters in E. Konig and M. Thilo.⁵⁸ The chief attraction for this suggestion rests in the fact that the span of time from 605 B.C. to 171 B.C. is exactly 434 years, or 62 weeks.

Behrmann's hypothesis, nevertheless, has several difficulties:

- 1. If Jeremiah 25:1, 11 were exactly followed "there should have been a period of 70, not 49, years, these 70 years being described as years of service to the king of Babylon." 59
- 2. No word went forth in 605 B.C. to the effect that Jerusalem should be restored and rebuilt as Daniel 9:25 specifies. 60

years, beginning in 594 B.C. reach only to 545 B.C., a year in which nothing happened regarding the specifications of Daniel 9:24-27.

- 3. The first division of 49 years carries the time from 605 B.C. down to 556 B.C., but Cyrus' accession is dated to about 559 B.C. This means that the first division of time is again inexact or approximate.
- 4. There is absolutely no exegetical, chronological, or other justification for starting the 7 weeks and the 62 weeks at the same date. K. Marti objects rightly that it is a "clever trick" to let the first divisions (7 + 62) of the three (7 + 62 + 1) run parallel to each other rather than in sequence. There is nothing to support it. Baumgartner joins others by stating that this telescoping of the 490 years into 441 years is an "unjustified act of force." It has to be admitted that Behrmann's attempt at solving this problem of the historical-critical interpretation is unconvincing and can be rejected justly.

The other major suggestion toward a solution of this grave problem is the allegation that there is a serious computational discrepancy. J. A. Montgomery writes, "We can meet this objection only by surmising a chronological miscalculation on the part of the writer." B. Duhm suggests that "in this instance the angel Gabriel does not show himself well acquainted with chronology." K. Marti, in turn, speaks of "an error on the part of the author."

N. W. Porteous is a bit more cautious: "Whether or not the author was aware of this discrepancy it is impossible to say." K. Koch notes that "one has to charge him [the author] with a weighty miscalculation." In the final analysis the assessment of C. T. Francisco seems to be to the point, namely that the supporters of the historical-critical interpretation "prefer to say that he [the author] is mistaken, rather than they."

The supposition that "what we have here is a purely schematic number" seems to have some appeal at first sight. It is, however, difficult to accept that such an exact number as 434 years (62 weeks) is "schematic."

The most widely held supposition is that the historical memory of the Jews at the time of the writing of Daniel (supposedly at 164 B.C.) was very vague regarding facts and spans of time. E. Schürer was the first to suggest that dates of Jewish historians, such as Josephus and Demetrius, are untrustworthy in their chronology. Demetrius (before 200 B.C.), for example, is said to have overestimated the interval between 722 B.C. and 222 B.C. by 73 years; and Josephus also miscalculated dates to the extent of 30–40 years. The followed that the author of Daniel followed the chronology current in his time of around 164 B.C. This supposition has been widely accepted as providing a solution to this computational discrepancy.

G. Behrmann, however, has justly criticized the alleged datum from Demetrius on the basis that the text in Clement of Alexandria (Strom. I. xxi. 141) is uncertain.⁷³ Therefore, it seems unsafe to build a case on Demetrius. Chronological discrepancies in Josephus are evident,⁷⁴ but he is centuries later than the book of Daniel.⁷⁵

It should also be noted that the book of Daniel does indeed contain very accurate historical information (although poorly known during the later pre-Christian centuries). For example, the author of Daniel is correct in his description of Nebuchadnezzar as the builder of Babylon (4:30 [27]). For example, the author of Daniel is correct in his description of Nebuchadnezzar as the builder of Babylon (4:30 [27]). Even R. H. Pfeiffer was compelled to concede, "We shall presumably never know how our author learned that the new Babylon was the creation of Nebuchadnezzar (4:30 [H. 4:27]), as the excavations have proved."

The author was also correct in his knowledge that Belshazzar, mentioned only in Daniel⁷⁸ and in cuneiform records, was functioning as king when Cyrus conquered Babylon in 539 B.C.⁷⁹ On the basis of new cuneiform evidence the vexing chronological problem between Daniel 1:1 and Jeremiah 25:1; 46:2 can be solved without any discrepancy.⁸⁰ These examples indicate that the author of Daniel knew history quite well. Schürer's suggestion made more than one hundred years ago can no longer be sustained in view of new cuneiform evidence and modern scholarship's greater knowledge of historical events from ancient sources.

Finally, we must consider briefly the last division of one week of 7 years. The end of the 490 years in this scheme of interpretation is December 14, 164, the day of the rededication of the temple. This date also marks the end of the "half week," or three and one-half years, which commenced in June, 167. However, the period of the historical desecration of the temple did not last three and one-half years, as the time specification in 9:26-27 indicates, but only 3 years.

The "desolating sacrilege" was erected on 15 Kislev, 145 (1 Macc 1:54), and the first sacrifice was offered on it on 25 Kislev, 145 (1 Macc 1:59). Three years later on the same day on which the altar had first been profaned by heathen sacrifice, on 25 Kislev, 148, the temple was rededicated (1 Macc 4:52). Customarily the dates are transferred from 25 Kislev, 145 to December 14, 167 B.C. and from 25 Kislev, 148 to December 14, 164 B.C. 81

The dates of 167 B.C. and 164 B.C. have recently come under severe scrutiny by K. Bringmann. He reaches the conclusion on the basis of recent historical information and mathematical calculations that the temple desecration occurred in the year 168 B.C. and its rededication in the year 165 B.C. 82 If this dating is correct, there is from the death of Onias III (now to be dated to 170 B.C. as indicated above), that is, from 170 B.C. to the desecration of the temple in December 168 B.C., only two years, but three and one-half years are required on the basis of 9:26–27. Furthermore, from the death of Onias III in 170 B.C. to the renewal/rededication of the temple in 165 B.C., there are only 5 years rather than the 7 years required by 9:26–27.

There are also in the last division, that is, in the last 7 years, such insurmountable discrepancies of calculations that no possible mathematical solutions are in sight. Modern chronological research has increased the problems for the historical-critical interpretation of the time elements in 9:24-27 with information hitherto unknown.

These considerations indicate that at present there is no historical-critical scheme of chronological interpretation that can harmonize 9:24-27 with actual history. The historical-critical schemes have such serious problems of calculation in all three subdivisions of the 490 years (7 + 62 + 1), aside from numerous exegetical issues, that they do not present themselves as commendable and sound positions, well supported by history and ancient Near Eastern chronology.

Historical-Messianic Interpretation (Historicist)

The majority of Christian expositors over the centuries from the early Christian times onward have followed the historical-messianic interpretation of Daniel 9:24–27. Even pre-Christian documents such as the earliest translation of the OT, the Septuagint (LXX)⁸³ and the Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs (ca. 100 B.C.)⁸⁴ contain Messianic interpretations.⁸⁵ Indeed, "the most usual interpretations [of 9:24–27] of Judaism until after A.D. 70 ... were of the Messianic kind."

There is now evidence that the Qumran community (Essenes) also interpreted the 70 weeks prophecy Messianically. It was worked out before 146 B.C., and its "Messianic interpretation of the prophecy is one of the earliest interpretations of it on record." The Essene calculation expected the last of the 70 weeks between 10 B.C. and A.D. 2.88

Among ancient Christian interpreters pursuing calculations of Messianic import based on 9:24-27 are Clement of Alexandria (?-ca. 215), 89 Tertullian (ca. 150-225), 90 Hippolytus of Rome (170?-235), 91 Origen (ca. 185-ca. 254), 92 Eusebius (ca. 265-ca. 339), 93 Jerome (ca. 349-ca. 419), 94 and many others, down into the end of the nineteenth century and well into our own time.

The Messianic interpretation of chapter 9 has been eclipsed almost completely in historical-critical scholarship. Some support a Messianic interpretation but restrict it to verse 24.95 On the other hand, there are still stout supporters of the Messianic interpretation to the present among both Catholic and Protestant scholars on both sides of the Atlantic.96

The beginning point for the "seventy weeks," according to the historical-Messianic interpretation, is the "going forth of the word to restore and to build Jerusalem" (vs. 25, RSV). This took place in the seventh year of Artaxerxes I (Ezra 7:7–8) when he issued his first "decree" (vss. 11–26). The seventh year of Artaxerxes I now is established firmly as 458/457 B.C., with the return of Ezra in 457, and not 458 B.C.⁹⁷ Accordingly, Artaxerxes' first regnal year in Jewish reckoning began on Tishri 1, 464 B.C.⁹⁸

On the basis of the historical support for this date (457 B.C.) as the beginning of the first two divisions of the 70 week period (7 + 62 weeks = 483 years), the conclusion of the 483 years is A.D. 27, the year of the baptism of Jesus." The baptism marked the inauguration of the public ministry of Jesus as the Messiah, the Anointed One.

There are at least two major reasons for the choice of the first decree of Artaxerxes I in 457 B.C. (Ezra 7) as the beginning of the 490 years. The first and primary reason is both exegetical and historical.

1. Daniel 9:25a specifically identifies "the word" concerning the restoration and rebuilding of the city of Jerusalem as the beginning of the 70 week period. The issuing of "the word" is hardly to be understood to refer to a decree from God. Rather, it seems to refer to a royal order of a king, just as the "royal decree" (dat, 2:13, 15)¹⁰¹ to slay the wise men is said to have gone forth. On the issuing of the word is hardly to be understood to refer to a decree from God. Rather, it seems to refer to a royal order of a king, just as the "royal decree" (dat, 2:13, 15)¹⁰¹ to slay the wise men is said to have gone forth.

This decree or "word" was to deal with the restoration and rebuilding of the city of Jerusalem. Therefore, the royal decree of Cyrus issued in the year 538/537 B.C. (Ezra 1:1-4), which urged Jewish exiles to build "the house of God," that is, the temple, 103 cannot be meant. There is not a single word in the decree of Cyrus to restore and rebuild the city, as a city. The royal decree of Darius I (Ezra 6:1-12) confirmed the decree of his predecessor and related once more to the rebuilding of the temple. It likewise had nothing to do with the city, as a city.

The third "decree" or command is the one issued by Artaxerxes I in his "seventh year" (Ezra 7:7–8),¹⁰⁴ that is, 457 B.C. This command cannot be concerned with the rebuilding of the temple, because the temple was finished and dedicated in March, 515 B.C. (Ezra 6:13–18).¹⁰⁵ The events recorded in the passage of Ezra 4:7–23 tell us of a complaint by the Samaritans that the Jews are "rebuilding the rebellious and evil city, and are finishing the walls and repairing the foundations" (vs. 12, NASB; cf. vss. 13, 16, 21). If this report comes from a time later than the command of the seventh year of Artaxerxes I, namely, a period of uncertain political conditions for the Persian monarch after the Egyptian revolt of 448,¹⁰⁶ then one may safely conclude that the command issued in 457 B.C. related to the restoration and rebuilding of Jerusalem.

It should be noted that the "troublous times" (9:25) during which Jerusalem will be built again is reflected clearly in the events recorded in Ezra 4:7-23. Although the actual wording of the command of Artaxerxes I of 457 B.C. makes no explicit mention of any order to rebuild the city of Jerusalem, this is actually what appears to have been the intent so far as the understanding of the Jews to whom it was given is concerned.

Thirteen years after the issuing of the command of Artaxerxes I, that is, in the twentieth year of his reign (445/444 B.C.), the report comes to Nehemiah by Hanani that "the wall of Jerusalem is broken down and its gates are burned with fire" (Neh 1:3, NASB). This implies that the city had been rebuilt, a program which could hardly have started before 457 B.C., because the decrees of both Cyrus and Darius related only to the building of the temple.

Ezra himself confesses that permission had been granted by God through the Persian kings "to raise up the house of our God, to restore its ruins, and give us a wall in Judah and Jerusalem" (Ezra 9:9, NASB). That Ezra considered the third "decree" to be the culmination of the three decrees is evident from his reference to the "decree of Cyrus, Darius, and Artaxerxes king of Persia" (Ezra 6:14, NASB).

It should also be noted that of the four decrees known, only two are principal and leading decrees. The decree of Cyrus figures as a principal decree, whereas the decree of Darius simply confirmed that of Cyrus.¹⁰⁷ The other principal decree was the command of the seventh year of Artaxerxes, whereas that of his twentieth year is but an enlargement and renewal of his first decree. "The decrees of Cyrus and Darius relate to their building of the temple; those of Artaxerxes to the condition of Judah and Jerusalem."

2. The second reason for the choice of the first "decree" of Artaxerxes in 457 B.C. is based on the calculation of the 490 years. Only this command fits a 490-solar-year computation. The principle of recognizing the fulfillment of prophecy also comes into play. Here one should be reminded that the need to find a fitting end is shared equally by the historical-messianic interpretation and its rivals.

The end of the first division of 7 weeks is 408 B.C. ¹⁰⁹ This first division of 49 years is assigned to the restoration and rebuilding of Jerusalem. The paucity of information surrounding the period of about 400 B.C. inevitably precludes any verification of the accuracy of the date of 408 B.C. for the restoration of the city of Jerusalem.

The second division of 62 weeks, 434 years, completes the period up to the appearance of the Messiah in A.D. 27.¹¹⁰ The traditional historical Messianic interpretation follows the punctuation of the LXX, Theodotion, Vulgate, and Syriac versions, which was taken over into English versions to the present (KJV, ASV, ERV [margin], MLB, JB, NASB). This means that the clause reads, "Until Messiah the Prince there will be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks; it will be built again" (9:25, NASB).

There are English versions that follow the punctuation of the Masoretic text (ERV, RSV, NEB) which has an *athnach* (the principal disjunctive divider within a verse) after the words "seven weeks." Punctuation marks in Hebrew manuscripts did not come into general use before a flowering of Masoretic activity between A.D. 600 and A.D. 930. Their use was crystallized in the present form only in the ninth/tenth century while it continued in small matters of accentuation into the fourteenth century.¹¹¹

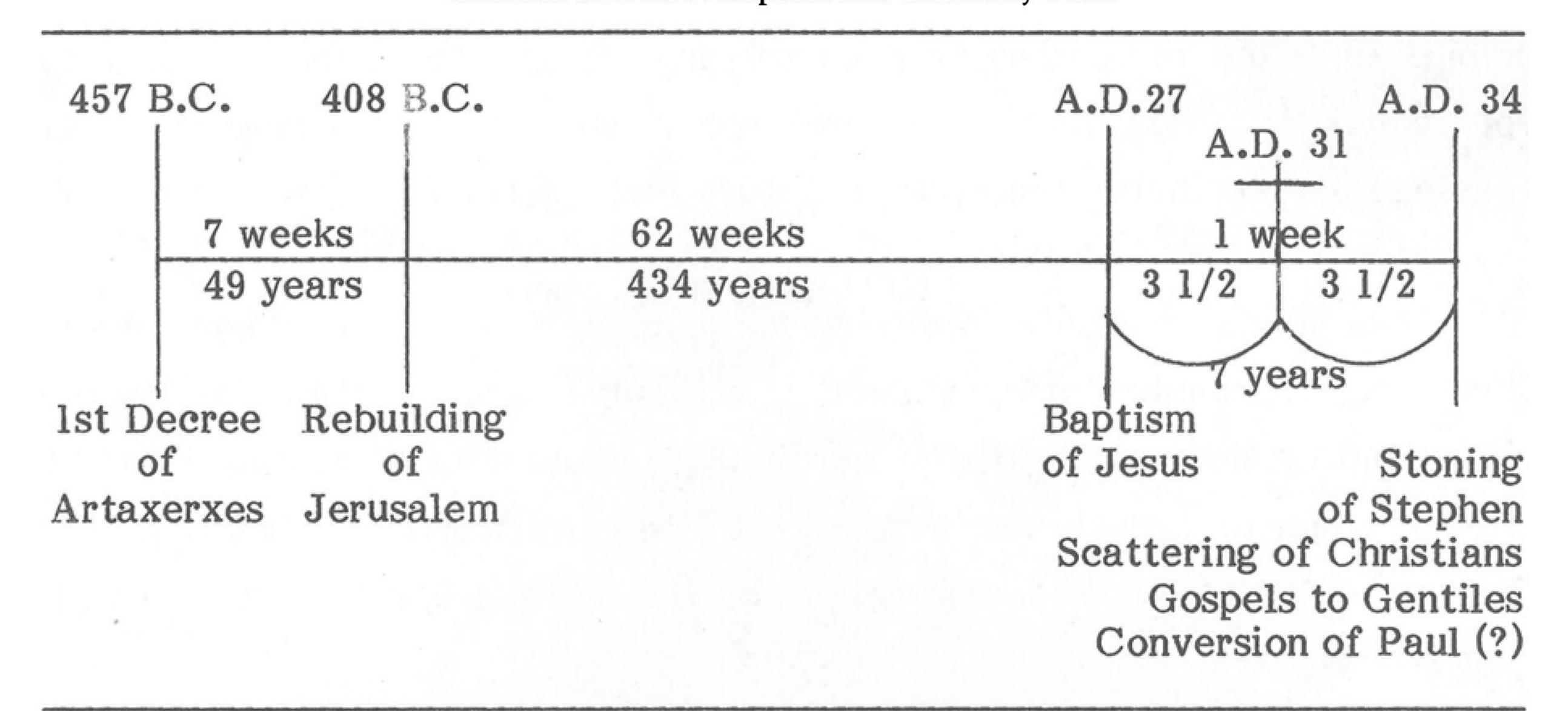
Present evidence suggests that accents in the Greek versions are earlier than those of the Hebrew manuscripts of the Masoretes. Contextual considerations have also been cited in favor of the older punctuation, Hermore, the literary structure of the poetry of 9:25 suggests also that the Masoretic punctuation is out of place.

Qumran texts relating to 9:24-27 do not support the Masoretic or later punctuation. All the ancient translations follow a non-Masoretic punctuation, namely the Septuagint and those of Theodotion, Symmachus, and Aquila in addition to the Peshitta. They treat the 7 and 62 weeks as a single period at the end of which the Messiah would come. 115

The non-Messianic punctuation of the Masoretic tradition seems to reflect a "rejection of the Messiahship of Jesus and the disappointment of the other Jewish Messianic hopes of the first and second centuries A.D." Accordingly, it reflects an anti-Christian bias. It appears on the basis of the evidence cited that the traditional punctuation in the old versions and reflected in English in the KJV, ASV, MLB, JB, NASB, etc., should be maintained on the basis of historical, contextual, literary, and versional evidence without doing injustice to the Hebrew text and context.

The third division of one week, the last seven years, begins in chronological succession to the 69 weeks (483 years) with the baptism and the beginning of the public ministry of Jesus Christ. "In the midst of the week" (9:27)¹¹⁸ (that is, three and one-half years later in A.D. 31) the Messiah would bring an end to the sacrifial system by His death on the cross. The last half of the week comes to an end with (1) the death of Stephen (Acts 7:60), (2) the scattering of the Christians from Jerusalem (Acts 8:1), (3) the carrying of the gospel to the Gentiles (Acts 8), and possibly (4) the conversion of Paul. The following diagram provides an overview of the historical-Messianic interpretation:

Historical-Messianic Computation of the Seventy Weeks



The exact chronological correlation between 9:24-27 and the events in history indicates the distinct superiority of the historical-Messianic interpretation over any of the other schemes. The only scheme that can claim perfect correlation and agreement between prophecy and history as regards 9:24-27, to the year and even to the half year, is the one that synchronizes the 490 years from 457 B.C. to the termination in A.D. 34.

Daniel 9:24-27 "is one of the most remarkable pieces of predictive prophecy in the Old Testament." The critical K. Koch notes with interest that "the unique and absolutely exact mathematical fulfillment of an OT Messianic prediction in the Christ event of the NT has played in earlier centuries an immense role as a proof for the truthfulness of Holy Scripture." The recent chronological correlations give an added support to the "absolutely exact mathematical fulfillment" of 9:24-27.

This unusually precise chronological correlation may indeed be a major stumbling block to the acceptance of the historical-Messianic interpretation by the modern rationalistic mind. 124 It has also been stated with great insight that the prophecy of the 70 weeks "with its accurate fulfillments turns out to be one of the compelling arguments for the authenticity of Daniel." The historical-Messianic view of 9:24–27 recognizes this passage as genuinely predictive in nature and Messianic in content as well as historical in its fulfillment.

It is now appropriate to discuss major objections advanced against the historical-Messianic interpretation. H. Junker argues that the decree indicated by the "issuing of the word" (9:25) could not be the one from the seventh year of Artaxerxes (Ezra 7:7-8). He contends that it has to be the decree of Cyrus, since it must relate, on the basis of 9:1-2, to the rebuilding of Jerusalem. 126

Junker is correct in his insistence that the decree must relate to the rebuilding of Jerusalem. However, his objection cannot be sustained, because the decree of Cyrus and the supporting one by Darius (Ezra 1:1-4; 6:1-12) were only concerned with the building of the temple and not with the rebuilding of the city as such.

New evidence indicates that the first decree, or edict, was made by Cyrus for the rebuilding of the temple (2 Chr 36:22-23; Ezra 1:1-4; 6:3-5) in the year 537 B.C. (Ezra 1:1). In this decree the king gives the order to build "a temple in Jerusalem" (Ezra 1:2), namely, "to rebuild the house of the Lord, the God of Israel" (vs. 3; cf. vss. 4-5). This decree concerned the return of the captives and the rebuilding of the temple but not a restoration of the city of Jerusalem. 127

The second decree for the restoration of the temple was issued by Darius (Ezra 6:1–12) and explicitly concerns the "rebuilding of the house of God" (vs. 8; cf. vs. 12), the temple in Jerusalem. In response to the matters related by Tattenai, king Darius had a search made of the edict issued by Cyrus. On the basis of Cyrus' decree, he issued one himself about 519/518 B.C. to reactivate it (Ezra 6:1–12). This decree is a confirming one and is limited explicitly to the rebuilding of the temple. It does not refer to or imply a rebuilding of Jerusalem.

The third "decree" or command (Ezra 7:11, 13, 21)¹²⁸ was that of Artaxerxes I issued to Ezra in the king's seventh year (Ezra 7:7), the year 457 B.C. It has been claimed, "There is not a bit of solid evidence to show that in 457 B.C. there was a royal decree, or even one from God, ordering the rebuilding of Jerusalem." 129

The fact is undeniable that there was indeed a royal decree in 457 B.C. by Artaxerxes I as Ezra 7:1–26 states. There is an explicit reference to the command of Artaxerxes under the designation of a "decree" (Ezra 7:11, NASB)¹³⁰ and by means of the Aramaic phrase "give a command" (simțe em) in Ezra 7:13 which has been rendered into English also as "issue a decree" (NAB, NASB). The evidence whether this decree included the rebuilding of Jerusalem is circumstantial.

It has been indicated above that Ezra 6:14 refers to "the decree of Cyrus, Darius, and Artaxerxes king of Persia" (NASB). The inclusion of Artaxerxes is explained by some as an "editorial mistake." But this removal of a name that does not fit one's conception does not do justice to the Hebrew and Septuagint texts, both of which include Artaxerxes. 133

Furthermore, the argument that the whole of Ezra 6:14 "is talking about the completion of the temple in March, 515 B.C., fifty years before Artaxerxes came to the throne" is misconceived totally. Ezra 6:14 never refers to the temple. This text speaks of the Jews building and finishing without identifying what was included in this activity.

F. C. Fensham states that up to Darius the decrees (of Cyrus and Darius) refer to the completion of the temple, "but with Artaxerxes the other thought pattern predominates, viz., the divine process in which Persian kings were used in the service of God (cf. also Isa. 45:1)."¹³⁵ The service of God which the decree of Artaxerxes in 457 B.C. effected was to restore the national autonomy under Persia and to have the city rebuilt. The temple had been completed already in March, 515 B.C. The fact is that the enemies of the Jews complained about the rebuilding of the city, the finishing of the walls, and repairing the foundations (Ezra 4:12) before Nehemiah received his support in 444 B.C. (Neh 1–2). These opposers also refer to "the Jews who came up from you [Artaxerxes]" (vs. 12).

Who were these Jews? "It is clear that they must have come to Jerusalem *before* the coming of Nehemiah—and the only such group we know of is the group led by Ezra in the seventh year of the reign of Artaxerxes" in 457 B.C. R. M. Gurney concluded independently from our study that "it would appear therefore that the building of Jerusalem was initiated by Ezra" in the seventh year of Artaxerxes.

The fourth and final "decree" is that of Artaxerxes I to Nehemiah in 444 B.C., the king's twentieth year (Neh 2:1). Although this "decree" is never called a "decree" as such (see Neh 1–2), "letters" were provided by Artaxerxes (Neh 2:7, 9) for safe passage and apparently in support of the rebuilding of "the city of my fathers' tomb" (Neh 2:5). When Nehemiah arrived in Jerusalem he inspected "the walls of Jerusalem which were broken down and its gates which were consumed by fire" (Neh 2:13) and involved himself in the process of rebuilding. However, the bulk of the work must have been accomplished already under Ezra. The evidence is that Nehemiah finished the walls and gates in only 52 days (Neh 6:15).

In Ezra's time the rebuilding of Jerusalem had begun (Ezra 4:7-23) under difficult circumstances on the basis of the command of Artaxerxes I in 457 B.C. (Ezra 7:1-26). This indicates that the fourth and final "decree" of 444 B.C. to Nehemiah by Artaxerxes I was simply an extension of his earlier initiation of the building of Jerusalem.

The fourth "decree" of 444 B.C. cannot possibly be the fulfillment of the "word to restore and rebuild Jerusalem" of 9:25 for at least two reasons: (1) The rebuilding of Jerusalem was under way already in the time of Ezra. This is evident from Ezra 9:9 as well as from Ezra 4:7–23. (2) The computation of the 490 years with a beginning (terminus a quo) in 444 B.C. extends the 69 weeks (7 + 62) or 483 years to A.D. 39 after which the Messiah was to be cut off. But such a computation reaches far beyond the actual year Jesus died. The usage of a "prophetic" year or supposed lunar year of 360 days (as proposed by the dispensationalist scheme) does not solve the computational problem either, as we noted above. Thus the only time period that is appropriate is the decree of 457 B.C. The historical-Messianic approach overcomes all computational problems.

The attempt to suggest that Ezra'a statement "to give us a wall in Judah and in Jerusalem" (Ezra 9:9) is to be regarded in a spiritual sense is not valid. The argument that "there was no wall around Judea; therefore the verse cannot be interpreted in a physical sense" is unconvincing. First of all Ezra 9:9 does not state that there was a wall "around" Judea. It only speaks of a wall "in Judea and Jerusalem."

If there is a wall associated with Jerusalem (cf. Ezra 4:12), then there would be a wall "in Judah" where Jerusalem is located. Secondly, the "wall in Judah and Jerusalem" is just as physical and real as "the house of our God," the temple, which is also referred to in the same verse. Both had been rebuilt according to Ezra. The attempt to ascribe a spiritual interpretation to this text is contextually and linquistically unfounded. The Hebrew word translated "wall" in Ezra 9:9 is $g\bar{a}d\bar{e}r$. The term can denote a protective wall built of field stones (Num 22:24), a temple wall (Ezek 42:7, 10), or it can refer to a "city wall" (Mic 7:11). ¹³⁹

A "weighty objection against taking 458 [457] as the beginning (terminus a quo) of the sixty-nine weeks"¹⁴⁰ is brought forward by M. J. Gruenthaner and concerns the theory, first argued in detail by A. van Hoon-acker¹⁴¹ and now fairly widely accepted. The contention is that Ezra did not come to Jerusalem until after Nehemiah and under Artaxerxes II (404–358 B.C.). Gruenthaner writes, "If this is true, then the Messianic interpretation of vss. 25–27 becomes utterly impossible."¹⁴³

This is indeed a "weighty objection," if van Hoonacker's theory can be sustained. This is not the place to assess the merits and weaknesses of van Hoonacker's theory. There are, however, serious objections to van Hoonacker's theory of the arrival of Ezra after Nehemiah. These objections (to which we refer the reader) seem to disprove his arguments conclusively and make his position untenable. 144

J. A. Montgomery suggests that the historical-Messianic interpretation "was sadly misled by the original error of ... [Theodotion] in construing the '7 weeks' with the following '62 weeks,' as though the 69 weeks were the first figure intended." This issue of the punctuation in the Masoretic text of 9:25a is also a "principal objection" in the discussion of C. T. Francisco. ¹⁴⁶

In view of the fact that the punctuation provided in the MT (Hebrew Masoretic text) is of more recent origin than that of Theodotion, LXX, Vulgate, and Syriac, it is unreasonable to speak of the "original error" of Theodotion. As indicated above, the punctuation of the Greek versions is older than that of the MT. It seems possible to speak of an "original error," only if one has on an a priori basis concluded that a particular interpretation of this text is superior.

Sound exegesis proceeds with a meticulous study of the text without resorting to dogmatic assertions as to which is a supposedly "original error." The fact remains that all punctuation is secondary and not original. The tradition of the Masoretes and their biases are reflected in their punctuation. Internal and external evidences against the Masoretic punctuation were discussed earlier in this chapter.

A more substantial objection relates to the interpretation that the destruction of Jerusalem took place in A.D. 70, and the "prince" of 9:26 who was to come is Titus. It is argued that this data cannot be brought into chronological harmony with the "seventy weeks" if they terminate in A.D. 34. This difficulty led E. J. Young to suggest that the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple "is a detail of information which is added that the Jews may know what will befall their city consequent upon the death of the Messiah. Two events, therefore, are mentioned in vs. 26. One of these, as vs. 27 shows, belongs to the 70th seven; the other does not." 150

The first part of Young's argument may be considered to be in harmony with the suggestion that the effect of Christ's death was symbolized at the moment of His death by the rending of the veil in the temple (Matt 27:51; Mark 15:38). The fall of Jerusalem with the burning of the temple is the external ratification of the meaninglessness of outward sacrifices after the death of Christ, the consequent outward manifestation of the state of affairs as they already existed. 152

Although the Jewish sacrifices did not cease with the death of Jesus Christ, the sacrifices offered after His death could no longer be regarded as legitimate and valid in God's sight (Heb 7:11–12; 8:13; 9:25–26; 10:8–9). In short, the fall of Jerusalem and the destruction of the temple in A.D. 70 do not need to be considered as terminating the "seventy weeks." Rather, they are to be regarded as external manifestations dependent on and subsequent to the achievement of the Messiah in causing the sacrifice and oblation to cease.

It has been suggested that the "prince" of 9:26 is not Titus but is rather identical with the earlier "Prince." In both instances the Hebrew term $n\bar{a}g\hat{i}d$ is employed. This view has antecedents among such church fathers as Tertullian, 155 Isodore, and Basil. 157 If this application is correct, no major action in 9:24–27 falls outside the 490 years that commence in 457 B.C. and conclude in A.D. 34 except certain consequences that result from those actions.

It is evident that each of the four major current schools of interpretations of 9:24-27 has certain weaknesses. It will have to be admitted, however, that a comparison of the exegetical, historical, and chronological strengths and weaknesses of each indicates that the historical-Messianic interpretation is more unified. It does not appear to be subject to the kind of chronological, computational, exegetical, and historical difficulties encountered by the other interpretations.

158 Accordingly, the historical-Messianic interpretation recommends itself as the most adequate of all major current interpretations.

In this case Daniel 9:24-27 is a most profound Messianic prophecy. With an absolutely exact mathematical fulfillment, linking OT prediction with NT fulfillment, it provides a unique proof that Jesus of Nazareth was and is the predicted Messiah. It adds its affirmation to the truthfulness and reliability of the Bible in its predictive element.

CHAPTER II

Commencement Date for the Seventy Week Prophecy

Arthur J. Ferch

Editorial synopsis. The messianic prophecy of the 70 weeks, which also forms the first part of the longer 2300 day time span, finds genuine meaning only if its correct commencement date can be established.

The angel interpreter clearly explained that the signal for its beginning would be "the going forth of the word to restore and build Jerusalem" (Dan 9:25).

Four "decrees" issued by three Persian monarchs are possible candidates for this "word." They are reviewed in this chapter:

- 1. Cyrus, 538/537 B.C. Granted return of the Jews and rebuilding of the temple.
- 2. Darius I, about 520 B.C. Reaffirmed and expedited the order of Cyrus to rebuild the temple.
- 3. Artaxerxes I, 457 B.C. To Ezra. Reestablished the autonomy of Judah.
- 4. Artaxerxes I, 445/444 B.C. To Nehemiah. Granted permission to repair Jerusalem.

In light of the evidence of Ezra 4:7-23 the author argues in favor of the decree of Artaxerxes I in 457 B.C. as the commencement date for the 70 weeks. This passage provides the only direct comments in Scripture about the actual rebuilding of Jerusalem—its walls and foundations—by the returned Jewish exiles. It notes that this building activity took place in the reign of Artaxerxes, most likely under the supervision of Ezra.

Nehemiah's activity was only a repair of the damage done by the Samaritans to the city upon which Ezra and his fellow Jews had been laboring. Since it took Nehemiah only 52 days to accomplish the needed repairs, Artaxerxes' permission to this patriot (given in the king's twentieth year) hardly qualifies for the fulfillment of the Daniel 9:25 prediction.

Chapter Outline

- I. Introduction
- II. Isaiah's Prophecies
- III. Edict by Cyrus
- IV. Edict by Darius I
- V. Edict by Artaxerxes I
- VI. Rebuilding Jerusalem—Ezra 4 VII. Artaxerxes' Permission to Repair Jerusalem

and in no way parallels the migrations of the Jews under Zerubbabel and Ezra.

VIII. Conclusion

Introduction

Determining the commencement date for Daniel's 70 week prophecy (Dan 9:24-27) has been one of the questions to challenge students of prophecy. According to verse 25a the event marking its onset was to be "the going forth of the word to restore [or return] and build Jerusalem...."

Unfortunately, no explicit proclamation is known. The investigation is further hampered by the sparseness of the information available for this segment of history. Interpreters, therefore, have been obliged to deduce from the biblical and historical evidence which "word," that is, which of several decrees, should be regarded as the appropriate one.

The question is significant. Conservative evangelical Christians throughout the centuries have interpreted the issuance of the "word to restore and [re] build Jerusalem" as the first in a chain of events which was to culminate in the coming of the Messiah (an anointed one), that is, Jesus. But the majority of modern historical-critical scholars assume that the 490-year prophecy terminated with the Syrian outrages against the Jews, ending in 164 B.C. Furthermore, given the interpretative link Seventh-day Adventists have suggested between the prophecy is of more than peripheral interest for reckoning the end point of the 2300 eveningsmornings in Daniel 8:14.3

At the time the events recorded in Daniel 9 occurred, the 70 year domination of Judah by Jeremiah (Jer 25:8-14; 29:10-14), virtually had ended. Daniel did not stand in doubt as to the meaning of Jeremiah's oracle (9:2), and he prayed that God would now be mindful of the desolated sanctuary and the city of Jerusalem (9:17-18).

In response to the prophet's prayer, Gabriel, the angelic messenger he had encountered in the previous vision (8:16), returned and gave him the prophecy of the 70 weeks. This period of time, according to Gabriel, was to begin with the "going forth of a word to restore and build Jerusalem" and would encompass the arrival of "Messiah, a Prince" (vs. 25, rendering mine).

What then is the starting point for this prophecy (the terminus a quo)? When did the word go out to "restore and build Jerusalem?" Interpreters have suggested several events as fulfillments of this sentence.

Isaiah's Prophecies

First, certain prophecies of Isaiah should be noted. Conservative scholars date these oracles Isaiah predicted (more than a century before the Persian monarch's birth) that Cyrus would say "of Jerusalem, 'She shall be built,' and of the temple, 'Your foundation shall be laid'" (Isa 44:28; cf. also 45:13).

Edict by Cyrus

However, when we turn from the prediction to the available and explicit records describing the relations between Cyrus and the Jews (these records are limited mainly to the biblical documents), we read only of a decree permitting the Jews to return and to rebuild the temple (Ezra 1:2-4; cf. 2 Chr 36:22-23). In this decree, issued around 538/537 B.C., no order is recorded to authorize the rebuilding of the city of Jerusalem. Since the rebuilding of the city of Jerusalem is specified in Daniel 9:25, it would appear that the decree of Cyrus does not qualify as the starting point for the 70-week prediction.

In response to Cyrus' edict the Jews slowly began to return to their homeland in Palestine (Ezra 3). More than a decade and a half later Haggai and Zechariah (their dated ministry began about 520 B.C.) tell us that instead of making the rebuilding of the temple their priority, the returnees had set about their own business. While the affluent built luxury homes, the majority of the returned exiles lived in and around the ruined city and suffered crop failures and droughts (Hag 1:1-11).

Edict by Darius I

Thus, 17 years after the decree of Cyrus the temple still lay in ruins. Temple building finally began in earnest through the encouragement, rebuke, and active cooperation of the prophets, Haggai and Zechariah. A personal inspection by the local governor in response to complaints leveled by the enemies of the Jews elicited a confirmation of the decree of Cyrus by means of an additional edict from Darius I (ca. 520 B.C.).

Though surpassing the generous provisions of the first decree granted by Cyrus, this second one likewise mentions only the restoration of the temple. It makes no reference to the devastated city or plans for its restoration. Since the rebuilding of Jerusalem is not mentioned in this decree, the edict of Darius I—as a fulfillment of the "word to restore and [re]build Jerusalem"—is also ruled out.

Indeed, in the vision which Zechariah received, probably sometime during the next 12 months, it is indicated that the cities of Judah and Jerusalem still needed to be rebuilt (Zech 1:7-17). In response to a plea which recalls a similar prayer by Daniel (see chap. 9), the Lord assured Zechariah that He would be "'exceedingly jealous for Jerusalem with compassion; my house shall be built in it, ... and the measuring line shall be stretched out over Jerusalem.... My cities shall again overflow with prosperity, and the Lord will again comfort Zion and again choose Jerusalem'" (Zech 1:14-17). Although Jerusalem still lay desolate, God assured the prophet that the "measuring line" would once more plot out the scheme for the city's reconstruction.

The temple structure was finally finished in 515 B.C. "in the sixth year of the reign of Darius the king" (Ezra 6:15). However, the information given in verse 15 appears to conflict with that given in the preceding verse. According to verse 14 the temple edifice was constructed by "decree of Cyrus and Darius and Artaxerxes." Yet, Artaxerxes I did not even come to the throne for another half century after the date proposed in Ezra 6:15.

Possibly the best way to reconcile these two verses is to recognize that although the temple was completed in 515 B.C., the benefits which Artaxerxes I bestowed upon the temple in 457 B.C. were considered substantial enough to include this later Persian king as a benefactor in the list with his predecessors (cf. Ezra 7:11-27). It would seem here (as elsewhere in the book of Ezra) that the writer summarized the happenings thematically and did not, therefore, always record them in chronological order.

A similar stylistic characteristic of the book of Ezra may be noticed in the relationship between chapters 7 and 4. First, we give a brief survey of Ezra 7 and then note its relationship with the record of chapter 4.

Edict by Artaxerxes I

Ezra 7 mentions a third decree, issued this time by the Persian king, Artaxerxes I. According to the account Ezra and a group of Jews in response to this ruler's directives went up from Babylon to Jerusalem in the seventh year of his reign (Ezra 7:6-7, 11-17). Assuming that this king is Artaxerxes I, we note that Ezra and a considerable company of people—priests, Levites, singers, gate-keepers, and temple servants—left Mesopotamia in 457 B.C. and, after a journey lasting several months, arrived at Jerusalem.

Since the temple had been completed more than half a century earlier, it is understandable why the decree of Artaxerxes says nothing about temple construction. Instead, the edict specifies that: (1) Jews willing to return to Judea may do so. (2) Ezra is to investigate the spiritual conditions of the people in Judea and to convey certain entrusted treasures for the temple to the officials there. (3) These gifts together with other amounts of silver and gold which might be given him in Babylon were to be used to purchase sacrificial offerings and to care for other perceived needs in connection with the temple worship. (4) Temple servants were to be exempt from taxation. (5) Ezra was authorized to reorganize the judicial and civil system of Judea which was to enjoy significant autonomy under the larger overlordship of Persia (vss. 12–26).

In a note of gratitude Ezra adds to the record his praise to the Lord for motivating Artaxerxes to aid the little Jewish community and for beautifying "the house of the Lord which is in Jerusalem" (vs. 27).

The decree (which may be accurately dated to 457 B.C.) mentions nothing about the rebuilding of Jerusalem. However, it does provide for a measure of civil autonomy unknown since the Babylonian desolation of Jerusalem and Judea (vss. 25-26). This in itself would suggest that conditions in Judea had changed remarkably and that autonomy was once again not only possible but was now being granted.

Rebuilding Jerusalem—Ezra 4

The return of Ezra and his group of fellow Jews described in Ezra 7 appears to be related to the events recorded in Ezra 4:7-23. Verses 7 and 11-12 provide this linkage: "And in the days of Artaxerxes, Bishlam and Mithredath and Tabeel and the rest of their associates wrote to Artaxerxes king of Persia; the letter was written in Aramaic and translated." "This is a copy of the letter that they sent—'To Artaxerxes the king: Your servants, the men of the province Beyond the River, send greeting. And now be it known to the king that the Jews who came up from you to us have gone to Jerusalem. They are rebuilding that rebellious and wicked city; they are finishing the walls and repairing the foundations."

This passage (vss. 7-23) is part of a larger narrative which unfolds the theme of persecution and frustration which the Jews encountered in their restoration of the temple and city from the time of Cyrus (ca. 537/536-530 B.C.) on into the reign of Artaxerxes I (465–423 B.C.).

The incidents recorded in Ezra 4 are not generally all in the chronological order of the book. This poses no problem when we remember that Ezra wrote about a hundred years after the return made possible by Cyrus. He was thus in a position to assess events from a later perspective.

After describing the events of the earliest period of post-exilic Jewry, Ezra turns from disturbances caused especially by the Samaritans in the time of Cyrus and Darius (vss. 1-5) to the frustrations generated during the days of Ahasuerus, presumably Xerxes I who ruled 486-465 B.C. (vs. 6), and in the days of Artaxerxes, presumably Artaxerxes I, 465-423 B.C. (vss. 7-23). From verse 6 on Ezra disregards the chronological development of the book in order to unfold the fact that the disturbances continued for another half century. With verse 24 Ezra returns his readers to the point at which he broke off his chronological order, namely, events pertaining to the time of Darius I (cf. Ezra 3; 4:1-4, 24; 5). According to Ezra 4:7-23 several lower state officials in the Persian province known as "Beyond the River" of which Judah was a part wrote a letter against the Jews who

came up from you to us have gone to Jerusalem. They are rebuilding that rebellious and wicked city; they are finishing the walls and repairing the foundations'" (vs. 12). This communication seems to imply (1) a migration of Jews from Babylon to Jerusalem, and (2) a royal consent to rebuild the foundations, city, and walls of Jerusalem. The phrase, "from you to us," suggests a migration of Jews authorized by Artaxerxes himself. This written scenario finds its best historical counterpart in the year 457 B.C. Nehemiah's journey to Jerusalem 13 years later was a solitary trip

Ezra 4:12 is the first clear reference to the actual rebuilding of Jerusalam since its destruction in 586 B.C. According to the Samaritans the Jews were rebuilding the foundations, walls, and city of Jerusalem. It is possible that the Jews initiated this flurry of activity on their own accord. If that were the case, Ezra 4:21 would mean that no royal permit had as yet been issued by the king. However, several considerations put this interpretation in question.

First, it is unlikely that such a large scale building activity would have proceeded without authorization. Artaxerxes had already granted the Jews judicial and civil autonomy under Persian overlordship. It would be, therefore, only natural for the Jews to proceed with construction on Jerusalem, the national administrative center (cf. Ezra 7:25-26). Second, there is not the slightest hint—either in the accusation or the royal response—that the city and its walls were being erected in contravention of the law or without royal consent.

It would seem that if, in fact, the reconstruction was unauthorized or a sign of rebellion, the Samaritan communication or Artaxerxes' letter would have noted, if not stressed, the illegitimacy of the project and the perfidity of the builders on these grounds. Yet, the issue of the complaint is not the rebuilding of Jerusalem and its walls as being contrary to the alleged harm that would come to emperor and empire were the city and its walls to be completely restored. The Jewish community is depicted as a potential rebel. It is not the rebuilding in itself which is depicted as rebellion. The king is advised that a rebuilt city would rebel and withhold tribute, custom, and toll.

The sequel to the Samaritan letter to Artaxerxes is puzzling. Why should the monarch who had signally favored the Jews in granting them considerable religious and civil privileges (under Ezra) suddenly reverse his decision? And then why should he change his mind again some years later and give his blessing to Nehemiah's trip to Jerusalem to repair the city?

Several points deserve consideration. Artaxerxes I, like his father Xerxes, was an erratic and moody person who could be expected to change his mind at any time. Historical sources indicate that a rebellion had taken place in Egypt (ca. 462-454 B.C.). This Egyptian revolt may have provided the political motivation for the king to grant Ezra several major concessions in order to ensure the good will of the Jews who lived so close to Egypt.

It is possible that later, when the satrap and satrapy to which Judea belonged rebelled, Artaxerxes shifted his favor to the Samaritans who feigned interest in the welfare of the crown. This suggestion would account for the unusual political procedures reflected in Ezra 4:17. According to the account it appears that the emperor disregarded normal protocol in that he by-passes the satrap (the head of the province) and deals directly with the lesser state officials of Samaria. Such circumstances also would explain Artaxerxes' direct order to the Samaritans to cease in Jerusalem until he had given further consideration and sent word (vs. 21).

The Samaritans were happy to oblige. "They went in haste to the Jews at Jerusalem and by force and power made them cease" (vs. 23). Although no explicit order had been given to destroy what had been built, they apparently broke down some of the recently erected walls and destroyed the city gates. These hostile activities probably are referred to in a report Nehemiah received a little later in Susa (Neh 1:3).

Artaxerxes' Permission to Repair Jerusalem

In the year 445/444 B.C. Nehemiah, cupbearer to Artaxerxes I, received a report from Jerusalem. Nehemiah inquired about the affairs of the returned nation and was told by his relative Hanani, "The survivors there in the province who escaped exile are in great trouble and shame; the wall of Jerusalem is broken down, and its gates are destroyed by fire.' "(Neh 1:3; cf. 2:3).

Nehemiah reports his deep shock at the news of his brethren (Neh 1:4-11). The shock Nehemiah received and the short time taken to repair the damage—52 days (Neh 6:15)—would eliminate the suggestion that the destruction reported to him refers to the devastation of the city by Nebuchadnezzar more than a century and a half earlier. Obviously the destruction Hanani alludes to was only partial. Furthermore, the devastation of 586 B.C. would hardly have been shocking news to Nehemiah. The report which grieved the Jewish patriot most probably refers to the Samaritan violence noted in Ezra 4:23.

Having heard the report, Nehemiah offers a prayer reminiscent of Daniel's petition (9:3-19) and requests permission from Artaxerxes to return to Jerusalem to rebuild the city and especially its walls (Neh 2:5). Nehemiah recognized, as had Ezra some years before, that it was divine providence which had moved the erratic king to comply with his request and to grant him special protection and royal letters of authority. Nehemiah's journey was not part of a migration like that of Ezra. Nor was the permission to go to Jerusalem which Artaxerxes granted in the twentieth year of his reign a part of a decree.

Indeed, the purpose of Nehemiah's journey was at first held secret. Only gradually were his plans to rebuild made public (Neh 2:11-18). It is significant that the memoirs of Nehemiah stress that the work concentrated primarily on the wall and gates of Jerusalem, rather than on the city proper (Neh 2:17; 3:1-4, 20; 6:1-15). Although battling constantly with opposition, a determined group of Jews and their governor, Nehemiah, completed the repairs of walls and gates in only 52 days, a period less than two months.

In comparison with the migration of Jews after the decrees of Cyrus (538/537 B.C.) Nehemiah's journey was quite different. It was not part of a migration. The decision of the king was not a publicized proclamation. The purpose of Nehemiah's visit was kept secret, and its work consisted primarily in repairing the walls and gates damaged only a few years earlier. Given these facts, it is evident that Nehemiah's journey in 445/444 B.C. does not match the specifications of Daniel 9:25.

Conclusion

Our examination of the historical data available to us indicates that neither the decree of Cyrus (538/537 B.C.) mentions the rebuilding of Jerusalem. While individual dwellings were erected here and there in and around the ruined capital, no evidence exists that the city proper was rebuilt as the result of their decrees. The evidence is that as late as 519 B.C. God still promised Zechariah in vision that plans would be laid for the reconstruction of the city. Nehemiah's work in 445/444 B.C. was limited primarily to repair work on the walls and gates damaged earlier through the Samaritan outrages. His task was accomplished in 52 days.

Hence, it would appear that although no explicit proclamation detailing the restoration described in Ezra 4—complemented by the events recorded in Ezra 7—best fits the historical setting envisaged in Daniel 9:25.

Thus, in 457 B.C. Artaxerxes I granted the Jews by decree signal spiritual, civil, and judicial privileges amounting to autonomy under the larger umbrella of the Persian empire. Such privileges had been unknown to the Jews since their subservience to the Neo-Babylonian empire. It would seem, therefore, that the rebuilding activity of the city of Jerusalem proper (Ezra 4:12) which occurred in the wake of these favors, suggests that the royal consent was implied in this decree to permit Judah to have a visible center from which the newly granted civil and judicial privileges of the state could be administered. Consequently, Artaxerxes' "word" or decree of 457 B.C. provides the best commencement date for Daniel's 70 weeks prophecy and the longer time span of the day-years (Dan 8-9).

CHAPTER III

The Prophecy of Daniel 9:24-27

William H. Shea

Editorial synopsis. Four modern expositions of this important prophecy are current in today's religious thought. They reflect the major "schools" of prophetic interpretation. The reader is referred to chapter 1 in this volume for a review of these positions. In this chapter the author takes the historicist approach in a careful verse-by-verse exeges of the passage.

Verse 24 with its introductory statement ("Seventy weeks of years are decreed concerning your people and your holy city") and its six infinitival phrases ("to finish"; "to put an end to"; "to atone"; "to bring in"; "to seal"; "to anoint") constitutes a summary of what was to occur during this time period.

The position is taken that the first two phrases describe the demands on post-exilic Israel to develop a righteous society in preparation for the Messiah's advent. The second two phrases describe what God would do through the Messiah: make atonement for sin and bring in everlasting righteousness. The last two phrases portray certain results or developments that would take place. Israel's failure would end the period and would forever silence the prophetic voice that from time to time had urged the people to repentance. On the positive side, however, the Messiah's atoning death would open the way for the anointing of the heavenly sanctuary and His priestly ministry.

Verses 25–27 enlarge on the introductory statement (vs. 24) with details that focus on the time for the Messiah's appearance, His confirmation and strengthening of the covenant, and particularly upon His atoning death. The latter brought an end to the sacrificial ritual, but it brought in everlasting righteousness, making possible the Messiah's priestly mediation of His merits in behalf of penitent sinners in the heavenly sanctuary.

The author examines the chronological data available in regard to the five events predicted in the passage. Two of these dates, 457 B.C., the seventh year of Artaxerses I (the starting point of the prophecy), and A.D. 27, the fifteenth year of Tiberius Caesar (the baptism of Jesus and beginning of His ministry) may be regarded as fully established. A.D. 34 (the end of the period) represents the most reasonable date for the stoning of Stephen. A.D. 30 or A.D. 31 (the year of the Messiah's death) represents an accuracy of plus or minus one year. No sources are available to evaluate 408 B.C. (the close of the first 49 years of the prophecy). The four time predictions in the prophecy that can be evaluated offer their testimony to God's foreknowledge as He has seen fit to reveal His will through prophecy.

A major position in the Adventist historicist interpretation is that this passage (vss. 24–27) is the angel Gabriel's delayed explanation and further elaboration of the 2300 day-year time prophecy of the previous vision (8:14, 26). In support of this position the author adduces four time relationships between the two visions. These clearly indicate that the 70 weeks and the 2300 days were intended to be understood as linked together. It is this linkage that provides the 2300 days with both a starting point and a confirmation of its ending date.

Daniel 9:24–27 ties in with Daniel's other prophecies with its reference to the anointing of a "holy of holies"—the heavenly sanctuary. Daniel 9 foresees the Messiah making atonement for sin and bringing in everlasting righteousness. Thus the way is opened into the heavenly sanctuary for His priestly mediation. Daniel 8 views the Messiah as the Prince of the Host performing priestly service in the heavenly sanctuary, a ministry that is attacked by the little horn. Daniel 7 depicts the Messiah as the Son of man—at the close of the judgment in the heavenly sanctuary—receiving His everlasting dominion and kingdom.

Chapter Outline

- I. Exegesis (vss. 24-27)
- II. Chronology
- III. Time Relations Between Daniel 8 and 9
- IV. Literary Structure of Daniel 9:24-27
- V. Daniel 9:24-27 in the Literary Structure of the Book
- VI. Theology of Daniel 9:24-27

Exegesis

Verse 24

"Seventy weeks are cut off upon your people and upon your holy city." The introductory phrase of this prophecy indicates that its contents are concerned specifically with the post-exilic Jewish community that settled and developed in Judah and Jerusalem. It does not belong to the same category of prophecy as the four great prophetic outlines of world history that appear in chapters 2, 7, 8, and 11. Nor does it end with their same conclusion, the final eschatological kingdom of God. Daniel 9:27 ends with Jerusalem in ruins. Thus the world history presented in those other lines of prophecy was to extend far beyond the events of 9:27 before the final eschatological kingdom would come.

The prophecy of 9:24–27 naturally divides into two sections. This introductory phrase ("seventy weeks are determined," etc.) and the six infinitival phrases which follow constitute a summary of what is to happen by the time the 70 weeks end. This constitutes the first section of the prophecy. The details of this summary are then spelled out in the second section (vss. 25–27). With this brief outline in mind we turn to an examination of the six infinitival phrases.

1. "To bring to an end the rebellion." The verb written here as kālā', "restrain," makes better sense if it is read as kālāh, "finish, complete." (It is reasonable to infer that Daniel's skill in Aramaic may have had an influence on his Hebrew. In Aramaic a final letter aleph [] and a final hē [h] can alternate).

The word used for "transgression" or "rebellion" (peša') carries the particular connotation of sin as rebellion against God. It can be translated somewhat freely but more directly as "revolt, rebellion." The definite article ("the") is employed with this term but is not used with the succeeding five nominal objects of this verse. This use of the article places stress upon Jewish transgression and rebellion.

Jerusalem had been destroyed and was desolate—at the time Daniel prayed (9:1-21)—because of the rebellion of the people of Judah. This was both a rebellion against Nebuchadnezzar as their earthly suzerain and against God and the prophetic messengers. He had sent them. This prophetic phrase, therefore, warned them against following a similar course of action in the future. Thus, the opening phrase of the prophecy delimits a period of probation during which God's people are called to manifest their loyalty and not their rebellion toward. As in Deuteronomy, two courses of action are set before them, and they were exhorted to follow the positive course.

2. "To seal up sins." A form of the verb hat am ("to seal up") appears in this central statement of the first three infinitives of the verse. It is balanced by the same verb in the central statement of the second set of three infinitives in this same verse. In the derived conjugations "to seal up" often means "to stop up, shut up, complete, bring to an end." These extended meanings provide the best sense here. The Hebrew word for sin in this instance (hat at at) is the common "miss-the-mark" type of sin. It is used in the plural and without the article which means that it refers to sins in general and not sin offerings.

This prophetic statement charged the residents of Judah to bring an end to the sinful state of their society. Just as this prophecy later indicates that they were to build the city of Jerusalem, so they were also to construct a righteous society—not a rebellious or sinful one—to live in that city. This statement, and the previous one, point out the responsibilities of the Jews, what they were to accomplish within the prophetic time period allotted. However, when the Messiah finally came at the time specified by the prophecy, they unfortunately had not fulfilled their responsibilities in developing that type of society.

3. "To atone for evil." The word used for "atonement" in this phrase is *kipper*, the term commonly used in the OT for this action. "Evil" may be defined broadly as including all "wickedness." The services of the tabernacle and the first and second temples required a continuing round of atoning sacrifices. But ritual activity does not appear to satisfy the requirements of this prophetic statement.

What is predicted in the prophecy fits better with one final and ultimate atoning sacrifice that far transcends what could be accomplished by the repetitious round of temple sacrifices. The NT informs us that this ultimate atoning sacrifice was given by Jesus Christ when He died on the cross. He can also be identified as the Messiah who was to come and die at the time specified by this prophecy. His life was given then "to atone for evil" as it was predicted.

4. "To bring everlasting righteousness." "To bring" or "to bring [in]" is a Hebrew causative form of the verb bô' ("to come"). The sense is that "righteousness" is caused to be brought in. Şedeq or "righteousness" is a singular noun in construct relationship with the plural form of 'ôlām, "age, everlasting." Literally this phrase translates, "to bring [in] righteousness of ages." The absence of the article is not significant. The ages involved obviously are the ages to come.

This everlasting righteousness follows directly after the phrase about the atonement that was to be made. Given this relationship, it seems reasonable to see the everlasting righteousness as a result flowing from the atonement. It is Christ's atonement on the cross that has brought in this righteousness for ages and ages to come.

Thus far in verse 24 we have seen that its first two phrases refer to the repsonsibilities that were incumbent upon God's people. Its second two phrases refer to works that God Himself was going to perform. The final two phrases of this

verse refer to consequences that were to result from those actions by God and His people.

5. "To seed up vision and prophet." The work "to seed up" (hātam) is the same as that which acquire three phrases carlier in this worse. Three meanings appear possible for it here. (1) to wall date or outbentieste. (2) to sless up (uptil a later

5. "To seal up vision and prophet." The verb "to seal up" (ḥāṭam) is the same as that which occurs three phrases earlier in this verse. Three meanings appear possible for it here: (1) to validate or authenticate; (2) to close up (until a later opening); or (3) to bring to an end.

If the second object of the infinitive ("to seal up") were "prophecy," either of the first two meanings would be preferred. However, its objects are "vision" (ḥāzôn) and "prophet" (nāḇî'), not "prophecy." Since this second word occurs

without the article it probably refers to "prophet" in a collective or corporate sense.

The third of these meanings ("to bring to an end") makes the best sense in this phrase if it is applied to prophets as persons rather than to their words. This sense is supported by the fact that it is the same as its parallel, used earlier in the

verse ("to seal up/to make an end of sins"). As far as Daniel's people and his holy city are concerned, therefore, "vision" and "prophet" are to come to an end by the time this prophetic period closes.

When did this happen and what does this mean? Since the final events of this prophecy appear to extend half a prophetic week or three and one-half years beyond the death of the Messiah, we must look to the NT for an answer. Consequently, Seventh-day Adventist interpreters have usually examined the first chapters in the book of Acts to find an event with significance sufficient to mark the end of the 70 weeks. The event commonly selected is the stoning of Stephen

(Acts 6:12–7:60).

What is so significant about the stoning of Stephen? Why is his martyrdom more important than that suffered by others at that time? Why is a martyrdom and not some other kind of event so significant in demarcating the end of this

prophetic period? When this event is evaluated in terms of the experiences of OT prophets, several aspects of it can be seen as highly significant in this connection.

The first point of significance has to do with Stephen's view of the heavenly court. When Stephen broke off his speech before the enraged members of the Sanhedrin, he, "full of the Holy Spirit, gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God (Acts 7:55, RSV)." This he announced to his listeners. They in turn cast him out of the city and stoned him to death.

When the Holy Spirit came upon Stephen, he was given a vision of heaven. By definition Stephen became a prophet at this point in time. It is to prophets that God gives visions of Himself like this. To cite but one parallel from the OT, the experience of Micaiah ben Imlah may be noted (1 Kgs 22). Standing before Ahab, Micaiah looked into the heavenly court and saw Yahweh sitting on the throne with the hosts of heaven around Him. It is from this session of the heavenly court that sentence is pronounced upon Ahab. The prophet serves as the messenger of the heavenly court who brings sentence to the king. By virtue of his connection with the same heavenly court Stephen stands in a similar position in this episode in Acts.

The second point of significance has to do with the nature of Stephen's speech. It should be understood in connection with the covenant of the OT. Studies in recent years have identified five main sections of the covenant formulary: (1) the preamble which identified the covenant-making suzerain, (2) the prologue which recited past historical relations between the suzerain and his vassal, (3) the stipulations of the covenant, (4) the witnesses to the covenant, and (5) the blessings and curses for obedience to, or violation of, the covenant. When the prophets came as reformers to call Israel back to the Sinai covenant relationship, they did so by applying the covenant formulary to situations current in their times. For a good example of this see Micah 6.

In making this call to the people the prophets brought to them what is known in Hebrew as a \hat{r}_0 or "covenant lawsuit" (the word occurs three times in Micah 6:1–2). As an introduction to their indictment the prophet cites God's mighty acts on behalf of His people in the past (cf. Mic 6:3–5). This portion of the \hat{r}_0 or "covenant lawsuit" thus parallels the prologue section of the original covenant (the recital of past historical relations between ruler and subjects).

Stephen's speech (Acts 7) which began with Abraham and ended with Solomon parallels this portion of the "covenant lawsuit." Looking at this experience through the eyes of OT prophets, we can see this episode as another instance where the Spirit-endowed prophet brings God's rîb or covenant lawsuit against the representatives of His covenant community.

If one regards Stephen as a prophetic messenger of the heavenly court who brings God's covenant lawsuit to His people (in continuity with the prophets of the OT), his death takes on much more theological significance. Hs is not one martyr more or less. We can now look at this highly significant event in terms of the prediction of 9:24 about sealing up vision and prophet.

Stephen is the last prophet to speak to the Jewish people of Judea as the elect people of God. But his voice is silenced in death by stoning. In silencing him they also silence the prophetic voice addressed to them with finality. The words and works of further prophets are referred to in the NT (Acts 11:28; 21:19; 1 Cor 14; Rev 1:1), but the difference is that these prophets may be identified as Christian prophets who address the church.

As far as Daniel's own people are concerned "vision" and "prophet" were sealed up or brought to an end with the rejection of this final prophet sent to them according to Acts 7. As is pointed out in the chronological discussion below.

As far as Daniel's own people are concerned "vision" and "prophet" were sealed up or brought to an end with the rejection of this final prophet sent to them according to Acts 7. As is pointed out in the chronological discussion below, Stephen's death was also of significance because it occurred in the year the 70 prophetic weeks came to their end: A.D. 34. Shortly thereafter, Paul was called (by a vision on the road to Damascus) to be an apostle to the Gentiles (Acts 9), and Peter was instructed (also in vision) that Gentiles should be accepted into the fellowship of the church (Acts 10).

6. "To anoint a most holy." The Hebrew phrase translated "most holy" is qōdeš qodāšîm. One interpretation of this statement (held since the days of the early Church Fathers) has applied it to the anointing of Jesus Christ as the Messiah. This interpretation, however, runs contrary to the way qōdeš qodāšîm ("holy of holies, most holy") is used in the OT. Outside of Daniel this phrase occurs more than 40 times in the OT. In every instance it refers to the sanctuary or something connected with it. (The only possible exception is 1 Chronicles 23:13, but this is debatable. It seems to me that even in this passage the expression refers to the sanctuary as well.)

If the "most holy" mentioned in verse 24 should be connected with a sanctuary, the question arrises, Which sanctuary? It could not be the tabernacle or Solomon's temple. They were already past history by the time this prophecy was given. It could not have been the second temple built in Jerusalem. That temple was dedicated for use upon the completion of its construction in 515 B.C. (Ezr 6:15–18), long before the coming of the Messiah predicted in this prophecy. By a process of elimination, the potential applications of this "most holy" object have been reduced to one: the heavenly sanctuary, mentioned especially in the NT books of Hebrews and Revelation.

Temples were anointed to inaugurate their services (cf. Exod 40:9ff.). The anointing foretold in this verse most naturally points to the inauguration of Christ's priestly ministry in the heavenly temple following His ascension (Heb 9:21-24). The sanctuary interpretation of this phrase is important because it ties the prophecy into the heavenly realm just as 7:9-14 and 8:11-14 tie their respective prophecies into that same heavenly realm.

Summary

Verse 24 functions as an introductory summation of the prophecy. Its six infinitival statements describe what was to be accomplished by and for God's people in Palestine by the end of 70 prophetic weeks or 490 calendar years. The first two statements describe what God's people were to accomplish: the development of a righteous society. The second two statements describe two aspects of a task that God took upon Himself: to provide a final atonement which would bring with it everlasting righteousness.

The last two statements portray two prominent effects that were to result from these actions. In the first instance, the failure of God's people to develop the righteous society He desired would result in the sealing up or silencing of the prophetic voice to them. In the second instance, the atonement provided would result in a new high priestly ministry of Christ in the heavenly sanctuary. From this summary of the prophecy's opening statements we turn to the more specific historical details outlined in the following verses (vss. 24–27). Verse 25 naturally divides into four parts.

Verse 25

1. "From the going forth of the word to restore and build Jerusalem." This event is of particular importance because it fixes the time for the commencement of the 70 weeks. All subsequent calculations of dates for the subdivisions of the prophecy must be measured from this starting point. Since the rebuilding of Jerusalem occurred as a result of a decree issued by a Persian king, that decree may logically be taken as the "word" referred to here.

The question then is, Which decree of which Persian king fulfills the prophecy? The matter is complicated by the fact that four different "decrees," dealing with the return of the exiles and the rebuilding of the temple and city, appear in the books of Ezra and Nehemiah. One of these must be selected for this starting point, but which one?

The problem of determining which Persian decree is indicated here is simplified by the fact that these decrees and the events that followed them occur in two basic cycles. The first cycle has to do with the temple. The second is concerned with the city. Note the following outline:

- I. Cycle One: The Temple
 - A. Phase 1, from commencement to cessation, 538-536 B.C.
 - 1. The first return, Ezra 1-2
 - 2. The temple founded, Ezra 3
 - 3. Opposition arises, Ezra 4:1-4
 - 4. Building suspended, Ezra 4:4-5, 24
 - B. Phase 2, from cessation to completion, 521-516 B.C.
 - 1. Work revived, Ezra 5:1-2
 - 2. Official inquiry, Ezra 5:3-6:5
 - 3. Official approval, Ezra 6:6-13
 - 4. Completion of the work, Ezra 6:14-15
 - 5. Celebration of completion, Ezra 6:16-22
- II. Cycle Two: The City
 - A. Phase 1, from commencement to cessation, from 457 B.C.
 - 1. The second return, Ezra 7–8
 - (2. Delay: Foreign marriages, Ezra 9–10)
 - 3. The city founded, Ezra 4:12-13
 - 4. Opposition arises, Ezra 4:14-15, Neh 1:1-3
 - 5. Building suspended, Ezra 4:17-23
 - B. Phase 2, from cessation to completion, 444 B.C.
 - 1. Nehemiah's return, Neh 1-2
 - 2. Work revived, Neh 3
 - 3. Opposition revived, Neh 4
 - (4. Delay: social reforms, Neh 5)
 - 5. Continuing opposition, Neh 6:1-14
 - 6. Walls completed, Neh 6:15-16
 - (7. Returned exiles, Neh 7 = Ezra 2)
 - 8. Celebration of completion, Neh 8–10

The statement in 9:25 is concerned with the decree that resulted in the rebuilding of the city of Jerusalem, not just the temple. The two decrees present in the first half of this outline can be omitted from further consideration, therefore, because they deal only with the building of the temple.

A temple does not a city make. This maxim can be illustrated by archaeological examples such as the temple on Mt. Gerizim and the temple found when the Amman airport was expanded. No towns or cities have been found immediately adjacent to these isolated temples. Thus, the two decrees of Artaxerxes I are the only real contenders to fulfill the specification required by the prophecy.

Ezra and his colleagues were the persons who first started to rebuild Jerusalem. This is revealed by the contents of the letter from the western governors to Artaxerxes I. See Ezra 4:7–16. "The Jews who came up from you to us have gone

Ezra and his colleagues were the persons who first started to rebuild Jerusalem. This is revealed by the contents of the letter from the western governors to Artaxerxes I. See Ezra 4:7–16. "The Jews who came up from you to us have gone to Jerusalem. They are rebuilding that rebellious and wicked city; they are finishing the walls and repairing the foundations" (vs. 12). The purpose of this letter was to get the king to authorize an interruption of this project, which he did. When the governors received his reply, "they went in haste to the Jews at Jerusalem and by force and power made them cease" (vs. 23).

This episode obviously occurred before Nehemiah's arrival on the scene, since he was successful in getting the walls of the city repaired in spite of opposition. What group of Jews returned to Jerusalem during the reign of Artaxerxes, but prior to the time of Nehemiah? Ezra 8 provides the answer to this question by listing the 1,754 men who returned to Jerusalem with Ezra 13 years before Nehemiah's mission there.

The logical conclusion from these correlations is that Ezra and the men who came back with him were the ones who led out in the first efforts to rebuild the city of Jerusalem. Their building activities were reported in the letter from the governors. Since Ezra's return and the events that followed thereafter occurred as a result of the decree Artaxerxes gave him (Ezra 7), that decree should be taken as the one fulfilling the requirement of the prophecy (9:25).

Nehemiah was not actually given an official decree like the one given to Ezra. He was only given letters of authorization to permit him to pass through the western territories and to requisition the materials he needed for his project (Neh 2:7–9). Nehemiah's work was complementary to that of Ezra. He was able to complete in 52 days the reconstruction that Ezra labored on but had been forced to stop (Neh 6:15).

Priority should be given to Ezra's decree in this case, therefore, because that was the decree with which this whole process or cycle started. Ezra's was the more official decree. Nehemiah only completed the work Ezra had already begun. Several questions arise at this point. The first is, Why did Ezra start rebuilding the city when the decree granted to him doesn't explicitly mention it (Ezra 7)? Here we can only cite the possibilities: (1) He was given permission to rebuild the city orally along with the decree; (2) Another supplementary, written decree (not recorded in the Bible) conveyed such an authorization. For a possible parallel here compare the differences present in the two decrees of Cyrus in Ezra 1:2–4 and 6:3–5; (3) Ezra understood the authority to build to fall within the limits of what was accorded to him in the decree. Lack of additional biblical information bearing on this point prevents us from narrowing these possibilities down further. We can only observe what occurred historically: Ezra did indeed begin to build the city according to the evidence from Ezra 4.

The second question is, Why does the decree appear in Ezra 7 when the rebuilding is referred to in Ezra 4? The book of Ezra is not arranged in a strictly chronological order. This is especially true of the material that appears in chapter four. Its purpose was to record the on-going efforts of the enemies of the Jews to thwart both the rebuilding of the temple and the city.

The contents of chapter 4 are not in strict chronological order. They have been gathered here because they fit thematically. Their chronological relations are still clear, however, because the names of the different Persian kings are present with them.

The final question is, If Artaxerxes gave permission for the building of Jerusalem with the decree to Ezra, doesn't he appear rather capricious and arbitrary to have withdrawn permission with the letter to the governors (Ezra 4)? The answer to this question is, Yes. He does appear to be capricious in this case. But this is not the only case in which Artaxerxes I acted in an arbitrary manner.

The lack of consistency in his character is illustrated by his handling of the case of Inarus, the rebel from Egypt. He was captured and taken to the Persian capital. He had received the word of the Persian general that he would be allowed to live, and Artaxerxes honored that word for a while. But when the Queen-mother Amestris prevailed upon him, he relented and had Inarus executed. The capriciousness of Artaxerxes, reflected in the book of Ezra, is quite in character.

From this discussion it is concluded here that the decree or word that went forth for the restoring and rebuilding of Jerusalem, as specified in Daniel 9:25, finds its fulfillment in the decree given by Artaxerxes I to Ezra in the seventh year of his reign. This decree provides us with the starting point for the 70 weeks. The date of 457 B.C. for that year is discussed below in the chronological section.

2. "Unto Messiah [the] Prince" (own tr.). The end of the time period referred to next is signaled by the appearance of this Person. He is described by two noun titles that stand in apposition and translate literally as, "an anointed one, a prince [māšîahò nāgîd]." The absence of the definite article ("the") with either term in verse 25 and with the word "Messiah" in vers 26 has been emphasized by some to minimize the Messianic import of this passage. This absence does not seem so significant when it is compared with similar cases in Daniel where an expected article does not appear in the text. The passage is poetic in form and the article was used less frequently in poetry. Daniel's Hebrew may also have been influenced by the post-positive article of his Aramaic.

There is no verb in this prepositional phrase. It is reasonable, therefore, to take the actual anointing of the Prince as the event to which this time period should extend, rather than to some other event in His life. Prophets, priests, and kings were anointed upon accession to office in OT times (1 Kgs 19:16; Exod 30:30; 1 Sam 9:16). Something different is envisioned here because his title is that of a prince and because his work, as described in the succeeding statements of this prophecy, transcends that of ordinary prophets, priests, and kings.

Historically this phrase was fulfilled with the identification of Jesus as the Messiah at the time of His baptism in Jordan and His anointing by the Spirit in A.D. 27. This date is discussed in the chronological section below. The Hebrew word used for "prince" (nāgîd) is important because of its relations with 9:26b and 11:22, the only other passages in Daniel where this specific title occurs.

3. "Shall be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks" (own tr.). A translation problem injects itself with these time periods. Should the seven weeks be connected with the rebuilding of Jerusalem and the 62 weeks with the coming of the Messiah, or vice versa? Following the punctuation of the Massoretes some modern translations and commentaries have connected the coming of the Messiah with the seven weeks and the rebuilding of Jerusalem with the 62 weeks. The LXX, on the other hand, has translated these phrases in the opposite order. I have dealt with this problem in some detail in the Spring 1980 (vol. 18, No. 1), issue of Andrews University Seminary Studies, pages 59–63.²

In my opinion, this problem can be resolved most directly by noting that this passage was written in poetry and then by analyzing its structure. In the lines below I present a portion of such an analysis, first in the Hebrew consonants and then in English.

| | Verse | Text | | Stress Accents | Poetic Units |
|-----|-------|-------------------------------------------------------|---------------|----------------|--------------|
| 25b | | mn-ms' dbr | Two subjects: | 2 | |
| | A— | From the going forth of the word | City Messiah | | |
| | | lhšyb wlbnwt yrwšlm | | 3 Tric | colon |
| | | to restore and to build Jerusalem | | | |
| | | 'd-mšyh ngyd | | 2 | |
| | В— | unto Messiah the Prince, | | | |
| 25C | | šb'ym šb'h | Two time | Bicc | olon |
| | A— | (shall be) seven weeks | periods: | 2 | |
| | | wšb'ym ššym wšnym | 7 weeks | | |
| | В— | and sixty-two weeks. | 62 weeks | 3 | |
| 25d | | tšwb wnbnth | One subject: | 2 | |
| | A— | It shall be restored and it shall be rebuilt, | City | | |
| | | rhwb whrws | | 2 Tric | colon |
| | | square and moat, | | | |
| | | wbswq h'tym | | 2 | |
| | | but in hard-pressed times. | | | |
| 26a | | w'hry hšb'ym ššym wšnym | One subject: | 4 Bicc | olon |
| | В— | Then after the sixty-two weeks | Messiah | | |
| | | ykrt mšyḥ w'yn lw | | 4 | |
| | | the Messiah shall be cut off, but no one shall be for | r him. | | |

What we have here, according to this analysis, produces an A:B::A:B arrangement in which the same lettered items deal with the same subject. This may be noted above and in the following summary:

A. To restore and to build Jerusalem

B. Unto Messiah the Prince in the tricolon of vs. 25b

A. Seven weeks

B. Sixty-two weeks in the bicolon of vs. 25c
A. (Seven weeks for the) Rebuilding of Jerusalem in the tricolon of vs. 25d
B. Sixty-two weeks to the Messiah in the bicolon of vs. 26a

This poetic analysis rules out the Masoretic punctuation and those modern versions (RSV, NEB, AB) which pattern after it. These versions construe the phrasing to mean that the Messiah was to come at the end of the seven week period ("to the coming of an anointed one, a prince, there shall be seven weeks," RSV). On the other hand the analysis confirms the ancient versions (Septuagint, Theodotion, Vulgate, Syriac) and translations which pattern after them (KJV, ASV, NASB, NIV, MLB, JB). These understand the phraseology to indicate that the Messiah was to come at the end of the second or 62 week segment of the prophecy. (The 70 week prophecy has three time segments: 7 + 62 + 1 = 70.)

For further discussion of this point see J. Doukhan, "The Seventy Weeks of Daniel 9: An Exegetical Study."³

4. "It shall be built again, square and moat, but in troublous times" (own tr.). By applying the year-day principle to the seven weeks of this first segment, we extend 49 years (7 weeks x 7 days = 49 days/years) from 457 B.C. to 408 B.C. No biblical or contemporary extra-biblical historical sources are available to tell us whether or not this phase of rebuilding of the city was completed by then. This does not mean (from a purely historical point of view) that this specification of the prophecy was not fulfilled. We simply have no information. We do know from Ezra and Nehemiah, however, that the city was indeed built in troublous times (Ezra 4; Neh 4, 6).

Verse 26

1. "Then after the sixty-two weeks, the Messiah shall be cut off" (own tr.). The expression "cut off" is an idiom which refers to the Messiah's death. The fact that this verb is used in the passive (Niphal) conjugation indicates that someone else would cause His death. He was not to die naturally.

Historically this was certainly the case in the death of Jesus Christ. The use of the preposition "after" ('aḥarē) in this statement suggests that the Messiah was going to be killed sometime "after" the end of the 7 + 62 weeks, that is, in the seventieth week. Thus this statement gives only an approximate time for His death.

2. "But no one shall be for him" (own tr.). Whatever this statement means, it was to occur when the Messiah was cut off, or died. The Hebrew form of this enigmatic statement is extremely brief—two words. Its first term consists of the negative particle, "ēn." Since the term occurs in a prophetic statement, it applies to the future. It may, therefore, be translated, "there shall not be."

The second element in the statement is the preposition "to," or "for" to which has been added the third person singular masculine pronoun, "him." This the phrase translates literally, "there shall not be to or for Him."

What shall not be "to/for Him"? The actual subject or subjects (whatever it is that doesn't pertain to the Messiah) is supposed to be understood by the reader. Basically, there are two possibilities here. Either the understood subject relates to things, material possessions, or it involves people. The first possibility would depict the poverty of the Messiah in His death. While this was true of Jesus Christ when He died, God is more concerned with people than with things.

The first word of the subject in the next phrase in this passage is the word for people. Following that interpretation, this statement would be translated, "but no one shall be for Him." This describes the rejection of the Messiah in His death, which was fulfilled so vividly in the experience of Jesus Christ (John 1:11; Matt 26:56, 74; Luke 24:21).

3. "And the people of the prince who is to come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary" (RSV). Historicist and futurist interpreters have commonly identified the prince mentioned here as a Roman. This is because the Romans destroyed Jerusalem in A.D. 70. However, this prince can be identified as Roman only at the expense of the Hebrew term for "prince" in this passage.

If one looks at the structure of this passage in the Hebrew text and notes the titles employed, it becomes apparent that there is a pattern to the way these titles are used. That pattern clarifies whether one, two, or three personages are under consideration. Note the arrangement:

vs. 25 Messiah (māšîaḥ) Prince (nāgîd) A + B
 vs. 26a Messiah (māšîaḥ) — A vs. 26b — Prince (nāgîd) - B

This pattern may be described as the breakup of a dyad or word pair (Messiah Prince). The original word pair has been broken up, and the individual terms (Messiah/Prince) have been reused in verse 26. Thus the sense of this pattern is to suggest that all three titles refer to the same person. This is in contrast with the preterist position that opts for three different individuals in these titles (Cyrus or others, in vs. 25; Onias III, in vs. 26a; Antiochus IV, in vs. 26b) or for those historicists and futurists who see two (Christ, vss. 25, 26a; Roman prince, vs. 26b).

Jesus Christ fulfilled the specifications of this prophecy as the Messiah Prince who was to come at the end of the 69 weeks (vs. 25). Jesus was the Messiah who was cut off (vs. 26a). It follows then that He should also be the Prince of the people who were to destroy the city and its temple (vs. 26b). The identification of Him as the "prince who is to come" (vs. 26b) fits well with the reference to the time when He was to come in the preceding verse (vs. 25). The Romans are present in this prophecy, but only as the "desolator" that is mentioned after this.

While the Roman army was the military power that carried out the destruction of the city and its temple, the Romans were not the ultimate cause that brought on that destruction. The reason the Romans attacked Jerusalem was because the Jews there had rebelled against them. Had the Jews remained loyal and subservient vassals, the Romans would never have attacked Jerusalem.

It was the Jews themselves, therefore, who precipitated the chain of events which ultimately led to the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans. They rejected their true Messianic Prince and revolted against their Roman overlords as well. The situation was rather similar to that which occurred when Nebuchadnezzar, stimulated by Zedekiah's rebellion, besieged Jerusalem in the sixth century B.C. (cf. Jer 38:17–23). The leaders of the Jews in the first century A.D. did not learn from the failure of their leaders in the sixth century B.C. And history repeated itself.

Thus far the following sequence of events appears to be foreseen by the successive statements of this verse: (1) the Messiah was to be put to death; (2) the Messiah's people were going to reject Him when He was put to death; and (3) the people who rejected the Messiah when He died were also going to bring upon themselves the destruction of their city and temple.

4. "Its end shall come with a flood" (RSV). It is not clear what the antecedent is for the expression, "its end." The antecedent could be the city or the sanctuary or both collectively. It does not appear to refer to a person. The imagery draws upon the picture of an enemy breaking into a besieged city. When a wall is finally breached, the attacking troops pour through that opening like a flood.

This fits well with the manner in which the Romans penetrated the defenses of Jerusalem in the summer of A.D. 70. The comparison of military forces to a flood occurs elsewhere in the Bible (Isa 8:7–8; Jer 46:6–7; 47:2). In the parallel passage, Daniel 11:22, the same word for "flood" is amplified by describing it as one of "arms" ($z^e r\bar{o}$ 'ô \underline{t}), which conveys even more of the military character of this flood.

5. "At the end of the war desolations shall be decreed" (own tr.). Since the idea of an end is rather definite, the preposition 'ad ("unto, until"), would be translated better as "on," or "at" ("at the end"). "End" appears to stand in construct relationship with "war." Thus, this phrase refers either to "an end of war" or (with the definite article understood but not written) "at the end of the war." The participle "decreed" (singular in number) and its plural subject, "desolations" and "at the end" of the war." Thus, this phrase refers either to "an end of war" or (with the definite article understood but not written) "at the end of the war." The participle "decreed" (singular in number) and its plural subject, "desolations" are "at the end" of the war.

tions," do not agree in number. This disagreement may be resolved either by repointing the participle as a plural or by taking this statement as existential: "it is decreed [that there shall be] desolations."

The desolations predicted here were effected by the Romans when, after conquering Jerusalem, they burned the upper and lower cities and tore down its walls. Except for three towers of Herod's palace, all of Jerusalem was destroyed. Epiphanius gave an account of what Jerusalem still looked like when Hadrian visited there in A.D. 130: "He found the temple of God trodden down and the whole city devastated save for a few houses and the church of God (Weights and Measures, 14:14c)."

1. "He will make strong a covenant for many one week" (own tr.). Since the Prince of the previous passage is not a Roman prince (according to the interpretation advanced here), the "He" in this verse refers to the Messiah Prince, or Jesus Christ historically. It is unusual for the verbal root ($g\bar{a}bar$, "be strong, mighty"), which appears here in the Hiphil causative form, to take the word "covenant" as its object. The force of this particular verbal construction is that the Messiah would "make a covenant strong." That is, He would strengthen a covenant that already existed. The translation sometimes given—"he shall make a strong covenant"—would have been more naturally expressed by an adjectival construction.

What covenant is referred to here in terms of historical fulfillment? The verbal usage employed suggests the Sinai covenant is in view. The Messiah was to confirm God's covenant with the people He originally elected from among the nations for this final prophetic time period (cf. Rom 15:8). During this seventieth week He strengthened a covenant that was already in existence. It does not appear to be the new covenant of the NT that is primarily in view here, even though it also went into effect in this period.

This strengthening of the covenant spanned one whole week—the seventieth. It did not begin, therefore, when Christ died on the cross in the middle of that week. That takes the strengthening of the covenant back to the beginning of Christ's ministry in A.D. 27. The sense here seems to involve more than just Christ's coming in His ministry as a messenger of the covenant in a general sense.

When the early days of Christ's ministry are examined for a covenant-making or strengthening event, the presentation of the Sermon on the Mount stands out. Jesus took a selection of commandments from the old covenant and amplified or strengthened them; He did not do away with them (Matt 5:21–48). Then He added to them His new commandments (Matt 6:19–7:11). These sections of His sermon were demarcated by references to the law and the prophets (5:17; 7:12). All of this is set in the context of blessings (Matt 5:3–11) and the possibilities of receiving the blessing or a curse (Matt 7:13–27).

This kind of presentation is thoroughly covenantal in character. Various NT scholars have noted the relationship between Moses' covenant on Mount Sinai and Jesus' covenant on the Mount of Blessing. This exposition of the covenant by Jesus at the beginning of His ministry provides the most direct connection between His time and the circumstances predicted here in 9:27.

2. "And for half of the week he shall cause sacrifice and offering to cease" (RSV). That is, beginning with the approximate midpoint of the seventieth week. The use of the definite article with "week" ("the week") in this phrase emphasizes that the same week is meant as that referred to in the preceding phrase. The subject ("He") should also be understood to refer to the Messiah Prince.

The Hebrew word for sacrifice (zebaḥ) refers to animal sacrifices in general. The Hebrew word for offering (minḥāh) is used commonly in Exodus to refer to cereal offerings. Here it probably refers to nonanimal sacrifices as a class. Together these two words encompass all animal and nonanimal sacrifices—the sacrifical system as a whole.

Physically, the sacrificial system did not come to an end until the temple was destroyed in A.D. 70. Spiritually, however, meaning had gone out of those sacrifices because Christ the great Antitype fulfilled their ultimate significance with His death on the cross (Matt 27:50–51; Luke 23:45–46). Since it is the Messiah who will bring the sacrificial service to an end, according to the prophecy, its termination should be seen in the sense of its loss of meaning. When Christ died, significance departed from the ritual. It became a mere round of meaningless ceremonies. This happened in the midst of the week when He was crucified, according to the chronology of the prophecy which we will discuss further on.

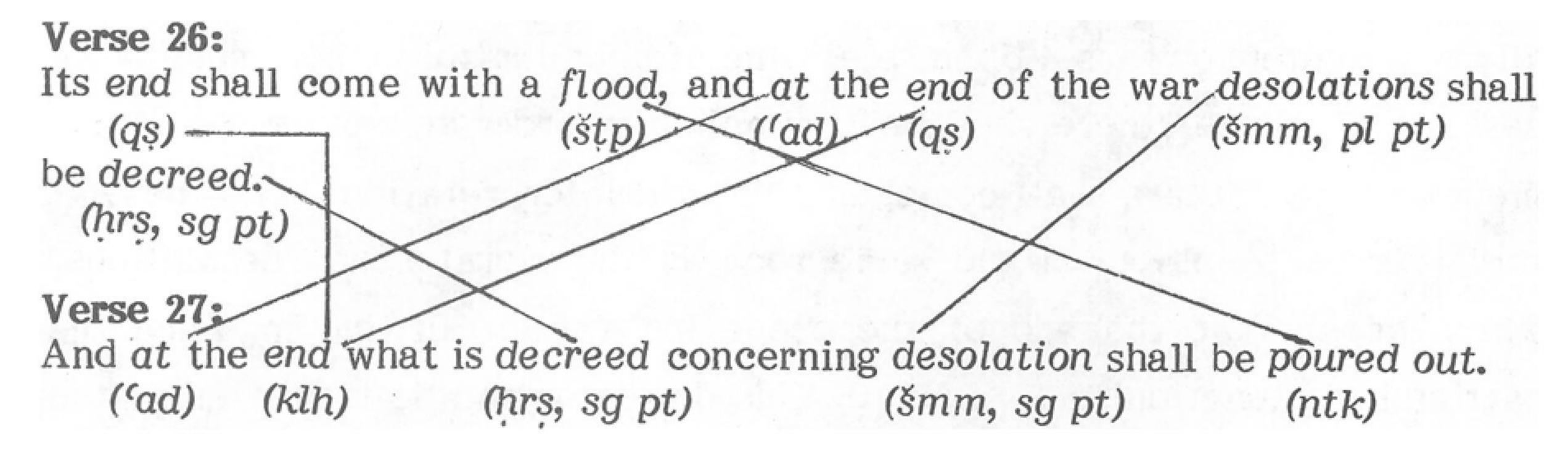
3. "And upon the wing of abominations shall come a desolator" (own tr.). The verb "shall come" is not written in the Hebrew text, but its presence may be implied from the existential nature of this statement. Liter ally, the sentence reads, "Upon (the) wing of abominations (there shall be) a desolator." Since "there shall be" is implied in order to render the statement sensible, "there shall come" is a natural interpretation. The "desolator" is a participle from the same root as the plural noun "desolations" which appears at the end of the preceding verse. In this instance the participle is functioning as a noun. This desolator can be identified as the cause of those desolations both lexically and historically.

"Upon the wing of" appears to be an idiom to express immediate consequences, that is, something that would follow shortly thereafter. Thus in contrast to the antigod activities of the power in 8:12–13; 11:31; and 12:11, this desolator and his desolations follow after or come on the scene of action after the abominations have appeared. The abominations were to come first and the desolator was to follow thereafter, at least in terms of time if not in terms of cause.

Historically this desolation was carried out by the Romans. The Jews were in possession of the city until that time. Since the abominations were to precede that desolation, the Jews—not the Romans—would have been the ones responsible for those abominations. This may have been fulfilled (in one sense) through the continued offering of the sacrifices after Christ's death. Not only had those sacrifices become meaningless, but their continued use also denied the antitypical reality that had fulfilled them. They served to deny the truth that they were designed to convey.

This is one possible fulfillment of these abominations. Another possible application has to do with the final fate of the temple. In the Roman siege of Jerusalem the temple was turned into a fortress, a final bastion of resistance against the Romans as they seized the city. This polluted and perverted in a final manner the purpose for which the temple was intended as a place for the worship and service of God.

4. "And at the end what is decreed concerning desolation shall be poured out" (own tr.). This is a very difficult statement to translate and interpret. In several respects the sentence parallels the last two clauses in verse 26 as shown below:



In verse 27 the opening preposition ('ad, "unto, until") probably should be' taken in the sense of "at," or "when" as in the parallel clause in vs. 26 ("at the end"). The noun, $k\bar{a}l\bar{a}h$ ("end") which carries the nuance of "completion/complete destruction" is synonymous with $q\bar{s}$ ("end") which occurs twice in the last part of verse 26. The participle ($h\bar{r}\bar{s}$) here translated "shall be decreed," and "is decreed" is the same in both verses, as is also the participle ($s\bar{s}mm$) rendered "desolation(s)." It differs only that in the latter case it is singular and is preceded by a preposition ('al, "on, upon, concerning"). The verb "to pour out" (ntk) is thematically linked to the word "flood" ($s\bar{t}p$) in verse 26.

Although these several parallels appear to indicate that this last clause in verse 27 is repeating the substance of the last two clauses of verse 26, some question remains on how the participle "desolation" (smm) should be translated. Should it be taken to mean "desolator" (as in the previous clause where it is written with a preformative mem in verse 27) or simply "desolation(s)" as in verse 26?

There are two main ways our clause in verse 27 can be understood. The first is to take this as a statement that describes the final fate of the (Roman) desolator. This interpretation renders the participle (šmm), the final word of this verse, as "desolator" rather than "desolation." In doing so, the translator breaks the evident links between this statement and verse 26 and introduces something else that is decreed here.

But there is a second way this clause may be understood. We have noted that the main words or ideas at the end of verse 27 appear also at the end of verse 26. The principal difference between them is that verse 27 lacks the word for "war." Given these rather direct relations, it seems preferable to take the final statement in verse 27 as applying to the fate of the city again. It does not appear to take off on a new idea in regard to the fate of the desolator.

The interpretation of the end of verse 27 that is selected here takes this statement to indicate that at the end of the war all that was decreed concerning the desolation of the city would be poured out upon it. This statement parallels the clause at the end of verse 26 both in terms of its thought content and its position in the literary structure of this prophecy.

This predicted destruction of the city raises the question why it did not occur at the end of the 70 weeks in A.D. 34. From the preceding analysis it can be seen that the 70 week period was one of probationary time. The negative results from failing that probation need not be expected on the same day that probation ended.

There is nothing in this prophecy to indicate the precise time the destruction would take place. Thus, the delay of that destruction for 40 years (A.D. 70) does not contradict any of its explicit statements. What was to take place by the end of the 70 weeks was the decree concerning the city's destruction that is mentioned in both verses 26 and 27. The results of that decree were to occur sometime after the end of the 70 weeks, and historically they were not seen for another forty years.

457 B.C.

On pages 84–88 we concluded that the decree for the rebuilding of Jerusalem was the one that Artaxerxes I gave to Ezra in the seventh year of his reign. Dates for the reign of Artaxerxes have been firmly established by four different sources:

- 1. Olympiad dates. Classical historians accurately preserved Olympiad dates for Artaxerxes. These were transmitted from Xenophon and Thucydides through Plutarch to the Christian chronographer Julius Africanus.
- 2. Ptolemy's Canon. This work produced by the Alexandrian astronomer contains a record of eclipses dated by regnal years of kings back to 747 B.C. His eclipses for the Persian period cross the regnal years of Artaxerxes I and help fix their dates.
- 3. Elephantine Papyri. The papyri from the island of Elephantine in southern Egypt were written in Aramaic by Jews who lived there in the Persian period. They were double-dated by both the Persian-Babylonian lunar calendar and the Egyptian solar calendar. These two calendars shift in different ways in relation to the Julian calendar. Thus calculations for the times when their dates intersect fix dates for the regnal years of Persian kings, including Artaxerxes I.
- 4. Babylonian Cuneiform tablets. Such tablets provide a relatively complete catalog of dates for the kings who ruled there from 626 B.C. to A.D. 75. These have been compiled by R. A. Parker and W. H. Dubberstein in their Babylonian Chronology. Julian dates for the regnal years of Artaxerxes I can be determined from these tables.

All four of these lines of chronological evidence point unanimously and harmoniously to the fact that the seventh regnal year of Artaxerxes I extended from Nisan (month I) in the spring of 458 B.C. to Adar (month XII) in the spring of 457 B.C. In view of the extensive amount of evidence available with which to establish these dates we may consider them as firmly and irrevocably fixed.

The Jews who lived in this historical period, however, did not use the Persian-Babylonian spring-to-spring calendar. They reckoned by their own calendar that began with Tishri (month VII) in the fall. Specific biblical evidence for this may be seen by comparing the dates found in Nehemiah 1:1 and 2:1.

The months mentioned at the beginning of these two successive narratives ran from Kislev (month IX) of Artaxerxes' twentieth year to Nisan (month I) of that same twentieth year. If Nehemiah had used a spring calendar, then Artaxerxes' regnal year referred to in Nehemiah 2:1 would have changed to the twenty-first on the first day of that month of Nisan. The fact that the regnal year number did not change is direct evidence that Nehemiah employed his Jewish fall-to-fall calendar to count them.

The only way to avoid this conclusion is to emend these numbers. But there is no manuscript evidence available to indicate a necessity for such an alteration. Since Ezra was a contemporary of Nehemiah, it is reasonable to apply the same fall-to-fall calendar to the dates in Ezra. Pre-exilic evidence for the Jewish use of this calendar in Judah is discussed in detail by S. H. Horn in his article, "The Babylonian Chronicle and the Ancient Calendar of the Kingdom of Judah." Post-exilic support for the use of the same calendar by the Jews is discussed by the same author in his *Chronology of Ezra* 7.

These correlations indicate that the decree recorded in Ezra 7 was issued sometime in the year that began in the fall of 458 B.C. and ended in the fall of 457 B.C. This is the year in which the commencement of Daniel's 70 weeks should be dated.

408 B.C.

For a discussion of this seven week period (49 years) and its date, see page 91 above.

A.D. 27

As discussed under verse 25 (pp. 88–91), the coming Prince was to be anointed as the Messiah at the end of the 69 weeks. This event can be dated to A.D. 27 when it is applied historically to the commencement of the ministry of Jesus Christ. According to the NT Jesus was baptized and anointed by the Holy Spirit in the fifteenth year of Tiberius Caesar (Luke 3:1, 21).

Dates for Tiberius were reckoned in several different ways. What we have here in Luke 3:1 is a date formula written in an eastern style, in the Scriptures which are themselves of eastern origin. It seems reasonable, therefore, to reckon this date in the manner date formulae were employed in that region. Such a method dates Tiberius' fifteenth year to A.D. 27/28, fall-to-fall.

A.D. 30/31

Daniel 9:26 does not prophesy the exact date of the Messiah's death. It only dates His death "after" the 69 weeks, that is, sometime in the seventieth week (cf. pp. 91–92 above). The reference to His causing sacrifice and offering to cease has been connected with His death.

That correlation narrows this date down to the "midst of the week" (see under vs. 27, pp. 96–97).

In Hebrew such an expression does not have to mean that precisely 50 percent of the prophetic week would pass before this event could occur as we think in western thought today. Regardless of how precise this language may or may not be, we may expect the Messiah to die sometime around the middle of the prophetic week that extended from A.D. 27 to A.D. 34.

Jesus died on a Passover Friday (Luke 23:56) in the spring. At first glance it would appear to be a simple chronological procedure to locate (in the appropriate new moon and Julian day tables) a fourteenth of Nisan that fell on a Friday in a year late in the 20s or early in the 30s of the first century A.D. The search for such a date is complicated, however, by two problems.

First, there is a superficial difference between the Synoptic Gospels and John as to which day of the week Passover fell on in the year that Jesus died (Matt 26:17, Mark 14:12, Luke 22:7-8; John 18:28). The second difference is more serious chronologically. At present we lack information on how the thirteenth or intercalated month was inserted into the lunar calendar of Palestine every third year or so early in the first century.

Given these variables, the chronographer must be content to simply cite the range of possibilities and their likelihood. After studying the relevant chronological materials in some detail, I would estimate that the year of Jesus' crucifixion probably could be narrowed down to either A.D. 30 or 31; other earlier or later dates seem considerably less likely. In the absence of further chronological data with which to determine this date more directly, it is difficult at the present time to choose between these two dates on a purely historical and chronological basis.

These dates of A.D. 30 or 31 bring us to within an accuracy of plus or minus one year in 490 for the chronological fulfillment of this prophetic datum. For an exhaustive and excellent discussion on the year of Jesus' death, see the Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary, vol. 5, pp. 251–65. The dates for the beginning of the first and seventieth weeks of this prophecy (A.D. 27, 34) are more important for fixing its chronological pegs than is this date in the midst of the last week. The preceding discussion has indicated that these dates have been fixed quite accurately.

A.D. 34

For the exegetical and theological reasons already cited (under vs. 24, pp. 80–82) the end of the seventy weeks has been connected most directly with the stoning of Stephen. The passage in Acts which describes this event, however, does not date it. That being the case, it must be dated through some other chronological avenue. The venue most readily available is to relate it to the date for the conversion of Paul. Paul was not a Christian when he stood by and watched the stoning of Stephen. Thus, the stoning of Stephen could not have taken place any later than the date of the conversion of Paul. On the other hand, it probably occurred only a relatively short time before that event.

In order to determine the date for Paul's conversion it is necessary to establish a fixed chronological point some time later in his career. It may then be possible to work backwards from there to his conversion. Paul's appearance before Gallio, the proconsul of Achaia, offers such a fixed point (Acts 18:12). Gallio's proconsulship can be dated to A.D. 51–52 on the basis of an inscription found at Delphi which mentions him.

Working backwards through the second missionary journey of Acts 16–17, we arrive at the spring of A.D. 49 for the beginning of this journey that took Paul to Corinth, the governing seat of Achaia. This would date the Jerusalem conference of Acts 15 in A.D. 48/49. Since that visit to Jerusalem appears to be the one "after fourteen years" mentioned in Galatians 2:1, earlier dates can be determined by projecting those 14 years back from A.D. 48/49 to A.D. 35/36. Galatians 1:18 refers to another period of three years. These are best taken as preceding the 14 years, that is, from A.D. 33/34 to A.D. 35/36.9

From this interpretation of the chronological evidence we may date the conversion of Paul to A.D. 34. While earlier and later dates have been suggested for his conversion, this date may well represent a median and a mean among those suggested.¹⁰

Stephen's stoning should be dated late in, or at the end of, Daniel's seventieth week since, on this basis, it could not have taken place later than A.D. 34. While Acts is not specific on this point, a few months would appear to be an adequate period to allow between the martyrdom of Stephen and the conversion of Paul. Although the point may not be proved with finality, the most reasonable date available for the stoning of Stephen is sometime in A.D. 34.

Summary

We have examined the biblical and extra-biblical sources that bear upon establishing the times of the five events predicted specifically by 9:24-27. Two of these, 457 B.C. and A.D. 27, can be established with considerable confidence in their accuracy. One of these, A.D. 34, represents the most reasonable interpretation of the data currently available. Another one, that of A.D. 30 or A.D. 31 (for the event that occurred in the midst of the seventieth week), represents an accuracy of plus or minus one year in 490.

No historical sources, either biblical or extra-biblical, are available with which to evaluate the date of 408 B.C. This renders it historically neutral when one comes to determining how accurately this prophecy has been fulfilled. On the other hand, the four remaining dates represent a rather remarkable collection of chronological and historical fulfillments of the events predicted by this prophecy. These dated fulfillments of timed predictions offer their testimony to God's foreknowledge revealed through this prophecy.

Time Relations Between Daniel 8 and 9

Elsewhere I have discussed the evidence that the term "vision" (ḥāzôn), as used in the question of 8:13 ("until when the vision …"), indicates that the 2300 days were to begin in the Persian period. That historical epoch is delimited by the prophecies of chapters 2, 7, and 11 to the period between Cyrus' conquest of Babylon and Alexander's conquest of the Persian empire (539–331 B.C.).

Can the date for the comencement of the 2300 days (within these limits) be refined any further? The prophecy of 9:24-27 provides that refinement by supplying the biblical basis for combining the 70 weeks (chap. 9) with the 2300 days (chap. 8).

We now summarize in brief the data that indicates the linkage between the time periods of these two chapters.

1. **Technical prophetic terminology**. When Gabriel came to Daniel (9:23), he instructed him to "consider the word [which I bring to you now] and understand the vision [which you saw previously]" (own tr.). Here Gabriel referred Daniel back to the vision of chapter 8 in a very specific way. The word translated "vision" here is *mar'eh*, a term that refers more specifically to the "appearance" of personal beings. *Mar'eh* is used in contrast to the word hazôn, the more commonly used term for the symbolic visions in Daniel. For one example of this contrast, see their occurrences in 10:7–8 (mar'eh), 14 (hazôn).

The same distinction is maintained in 8:26 where Gabriel assured Daniel that "the ... [mare'eh] of the evenings and the mornings which has been told is true." But he was instructed to "seal up the vision ($har{pa}$)." The first reference is to the appearance of the personal (angelic) beings who discuss the 2300 days (8:13-14). The second reference is to the symbolic vision he had seen up to that point (vss. 2-12).

When we come to 9:23, we find that Gabriel did not refer Daniel back to the symbolic vision of chapter 8 in general by using $har{a}$ 0. Instead, the angel refers him back specifically to the mare'eh of the two angelic beings in verses 13–14 and their discussion of the time period of 2300 days. Since the next statement Gabriel makes is about the 70 weeks, it is obvious that those 70 weeks are connected directly to the 2300 days. Thus the technical word for "vision" (mar'eh) clearly ties together these two time periods.

- 2. Time element distribution. This link between these two prophetic time periods complements our discussion above under prophetic terminology. The customary *location* for time elements in Daniel's prophecies is toward the end of their visions or the end of their interpretations (cf. 7:25, 8:14, and 12:7, 11–12). Chapter 9 is unique in this regard since its prophecy *begins* with a time period, and time elements are distributed all the way through it. This has the effect, in terms of literary structure, of juxtaposing the 70 weeks (the beginning of the Daniel 9 prophecy) up against the 2300 days (the end portion of the Daniel 8 vision). This literary juxtaposition suggests these time elements should be regarded as directly related to each other.
- 3. Persian period commencement. The 70 weeks began in the Persian period. It was a Persian king who gave the decree to rebuild Jerusalem (9:24-25). I have discussed elsewhere the reasons why the word "vision" (8:13-14) indicates that the 2300 days also began in the Persian period. This means that the time period of chapter 8 began in the Persian period in general, while the time period of chapter 9 began in that same Persian period at a specific point. Given these relationships, the date of the latter can be seen readily as supplying the specificity required by the more general datum of the former.
- 4. The verb "cut off." The verb used by Gabriel in his first statement about the 70 weeks is a passive (Niphal) form of the root hata ("seventy weeks are determined upon thy people"). This root means either "to cut off" or "to determine, decree." Because this is the only passage in the OT where the word occurs, its meaning here has been disputed.

The meaning of "determine, decree" has been derived from Mishnaic Hebrew that dates a millennium later than Daniel's time. However, even in Mishnaic writings the term was more commonly used with the meaning of "cut off."

It is a recognized principle of Semitic philology that the extended meanings of Semitic verbs develop from concrete meanings in the direction of abstract concepts. Thus, it is sound to infer that the root meaning of this word involved the concrete idea of cutting. The abstract ideas of determining or decreeing are the later development from this root idea. In Daniel's time, therefore, this word already meant "to cut." Whether the extended meaning of "decree, determine" had developed by then, cannot be determined at present due to a lack of comparative evidence.

The only significant comparative material, from Ugaritic Canaanite of the thirteenth century B.C., lends some support to the idea that this root's basic verbal notion was that of cutting, not decreeing or determining. Thus, these three lines of evidence—(1) root meaning over extended meaning, (2) the case of a Ugaritic cognate, and (3) the predominant meaning in later Mishnaic sources—all favor (but do not fully prove) that this verb should be translated "cut off" here. Its apparent meaning emphasizes the idea that the 70 weeks were understood to be cut off from the 2300 days mentioned in the preceding prophecy.

Summary

These two prophetic time periods of the 70 weeks and the 2300 days (chaps. 8–9) can be related directly. They are linked by prophetic terminology (mar'eh), their locations in the literary structure of Daniel (the juxtaposition of the time units), their start in the same historical period (Persia), and by the opening verb used with the time period of the second prophecy (hātak, "cut off"). Supplementary support for the meaning of hātak can be derived from its location within this prophecy as follows: From a literary viewpoint this word for "cut" (hātak) is balanced by another verb for "cut" (kārat,) that occurs in verse 26a. The word used for "decree" in this prophecy (hātas) in verses 26b, 27b is balanced by its homonym "moat" (hātak) in, verse 25c. Those interested in further information on the relations between chapters 8 and 9 may consult my more detailed study of this subject in The Sanctuary and the Atonement. 13

Literary Structure of Daniel 9:24-27

A careful study of the literary structure of this prophecy indicates that it was written in the form of poetry, as were many other prophecies in the OT. J. Doukhan has demonstrated that this poetic passage is also arranged in chiastic form. While I differ with Doukhan on some of the finer points in that structure, his basic idea that this passage is organized chiastically has been verified in my study of it. My suggestion is that there is not just one chiasm is this passage but that there are two.

The first chiasm is found in the overall summary of verse 24. The second is present in the more detailed presentation of this prophecy in verses 25–27. The basic chiasm of verse 24 can be seen in the following outline with reference to a brief summary of the chiasm in verses 25–27.

Chiasm I
(vs. 24)

God's Work

B Make atonement
Bring righteousness

People's Work

Cease rebellion

A' Prophetic voice ceases

Cease transgreassion

B' Heavenly ministry begins

The second chiasm of this passage follows (in summary form):

Chiasm II

(vss. 25–27)

B The Messiah

Construction of the City

A' Destruction of the City

The basic elements in A and A' above in this overview have been elaborated in paired or parallel units as follows:

The Messiah, 26a

Construction, 25c

Destruction, 26b

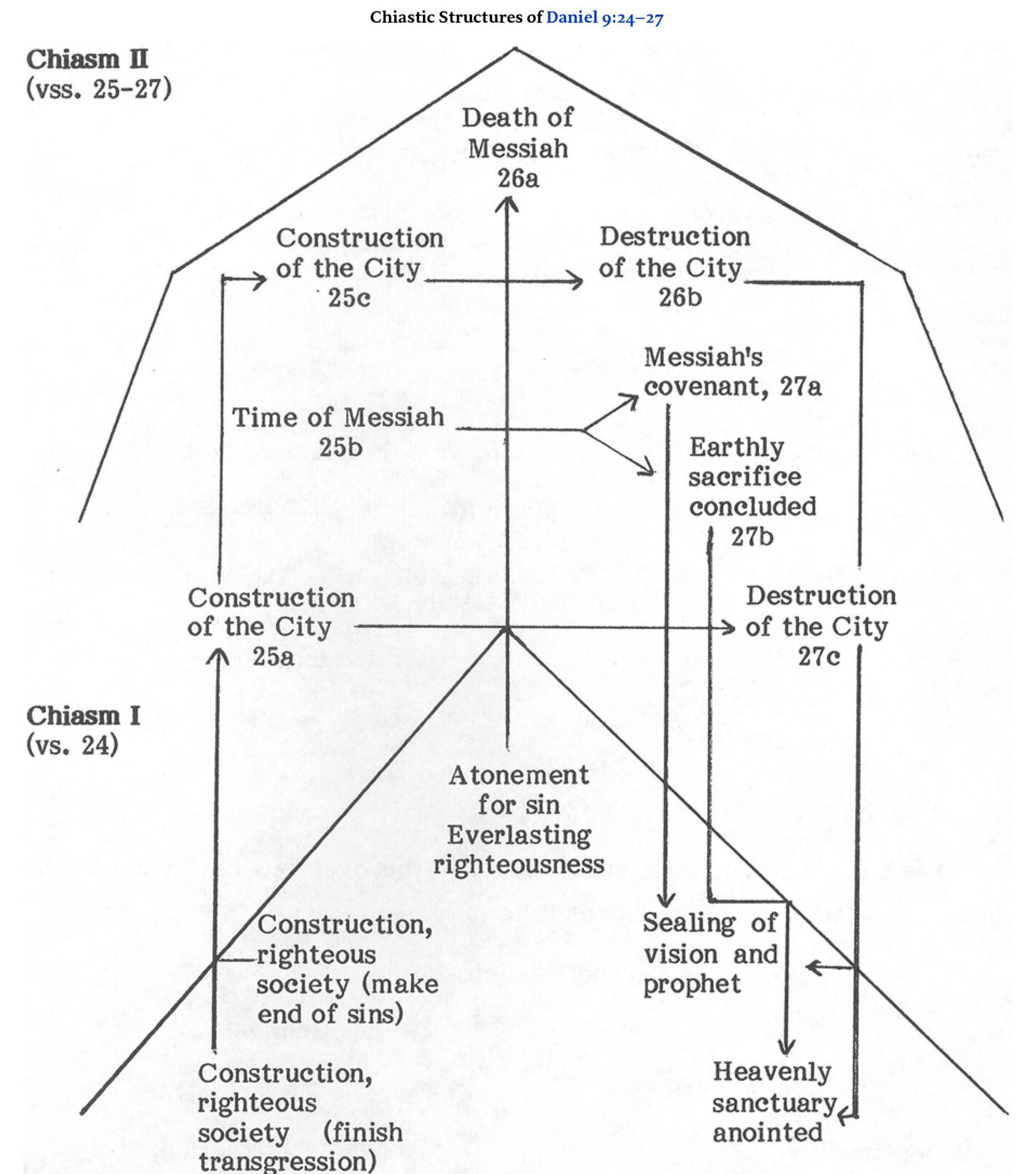
The Messiah, 25b

The Messiah, 27a

Construction, 25a

Destruction, 27c

The outlines of these two chiasms (vs. 24 and vss. 25–27) may now be joined with some details. Note they are placed in reverse order, the detail (chiasm II) followed by the summary (chiasm I).



Bible writers who employed chiastic structures as a literary device were thereby enabled to place a strong emphasis upon those statements placed at the central point of the chiasm. In the second section of this prophecy (vss. 25–27) it is

the death—the execution—of the Messiah that appears at the central point or apex of this chiasm. Thus the chiastic structure of this prophecy emphasizes the importance of His death.

The poetic form of the central tricolon (three-line stanza) in which this prediction is expressed contributes to the emphasis. Note that its form moves from a long line of 12 syllables to a

The poetic form of the central tricolon (three-line stanza) in which this prediction is expressed contributes to the emphasis. Note that its form moves from a long line of 13 syllables to a short, three-syllable line. This can be seen especially in the Hebrew in the chart below. Read from bottom to top. This can be seen from the transliteration, translation, and poetic analysis of the tricolon:

Poetic Emphasis on Messiah's Death (vs. 26)

| | Hebrew transliteration (read up) | Stress Accents | Syllables | English (read up) |
|----|-------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------|------------------------------|
| 3. | w ^e 'ên lô | 2 | 3 | But no one shall be for Him |
| 2. | yikkārē <u>t</u> māšîaḥ | 2 | 6 | The Messiah shall be cut off |
| 1. | w ^e 'aḥrē haššāḇu'îm šiššîm ûš ^e naîm | 4 | 13 | And after the 60 and 2 weeks |

At the very summit of the literary structure of this prophecy the Messiah stands alone in His death. The progressively decreasing number of words, accents, syllables, and consonants (in the Hebrew text) culminates with the prophecy's shortest phrase to focus on the aloneness of the Messiah in His death (literally, "no one for Him").

The chiasm of verse 24 can be tied together with that of verses 25–27. Just as the people of God are charged with the construction of the city (chiasm II), so they are charged with the construction of a righteous society to reside in that city (chiasm I).

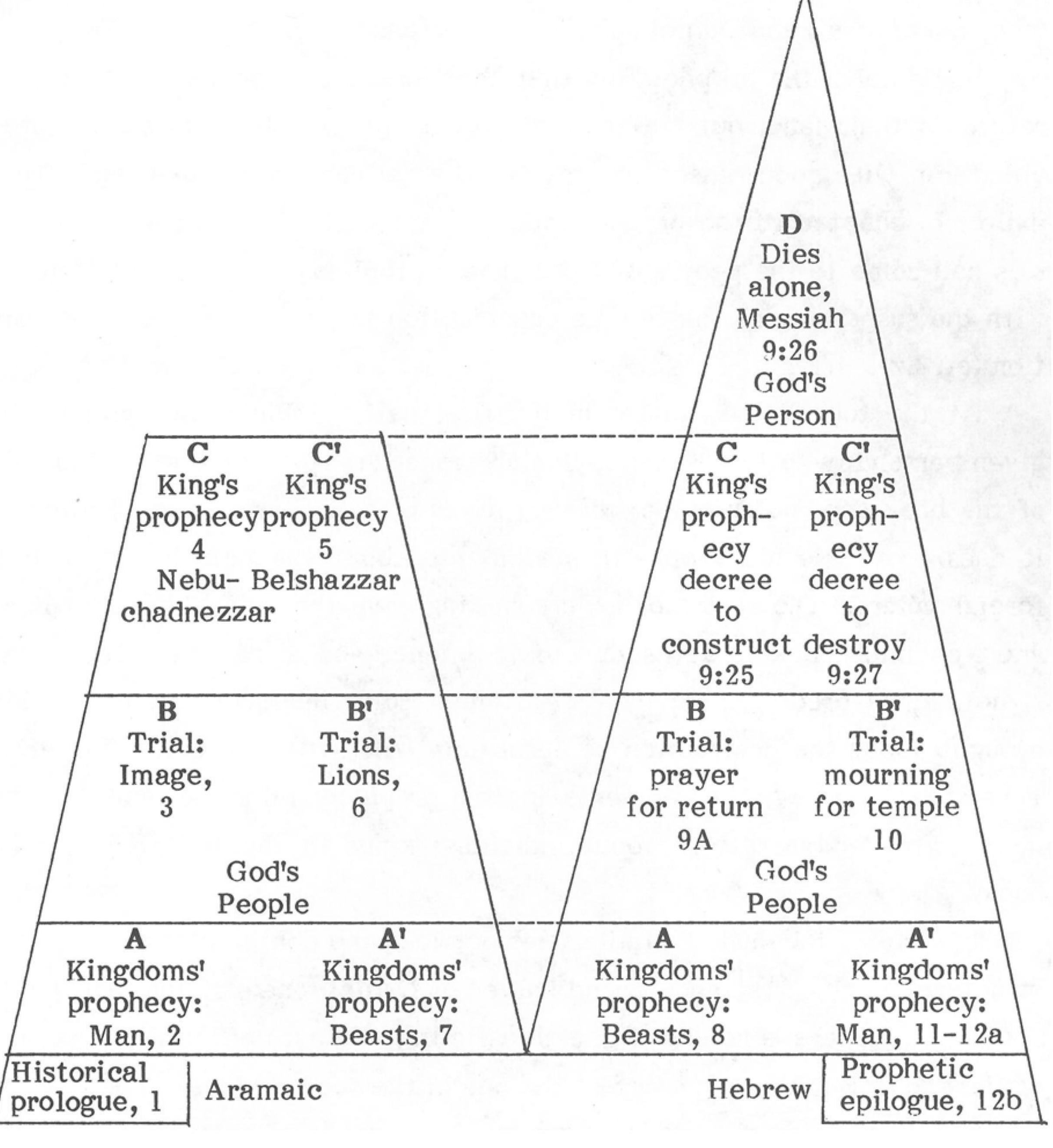
Just as the death of the Messiah occurs at the center of the chiasm of verses 25-27, so the real significance of His death is identified at the center of the chiasm of verse 24. His death would make atonement for all evil, and as a result, would bring in everlasting righteousness. The results of rejecting the Messiah appear at certain points in the descending limbs of both chiasms.

Daniel 9:24-27 in the Literary Structure of the Book

The basic work on the literary structure of the book of Daniel was done by A. Lenglet. In that work he suggested that the Aramaic section of Daniel (chaps. 2–7), consisted of three pairs of narratives that should be related to each other in the chiastic pattern of A:B:C::C':B':A'.

In this arrangement the two prophecies outlining world history (chaps. 2, 7) have been paired off (A and A'). The narratives of chapters 3 and 6, which tell of the persecution of Daniel's friends and of Daniel himself, have been paired off too (B and B'). The final pair of narratives (chaps. 4, 5) consists of the prophetic judgments pronounced upon the two Neo-Babylonian rulers, Nebuchadnezzar and Belshazzar (C and C').

Once it is recognized, this structure is quite obvious. I believe it may be taken as a basis for a literary analysis of the Hebrew section of the book which Lenglet did not consider. If this book were written in its entirety by the same author, then one would expect to find the same type of structure in the Hebrew half of the book. This appears to be the case. See the following literary diagram of the historical and prophetic portions of the book of Daniel:



In the second section of the book of Daniel we begin and end with two more major prophecies that outline world history, in chapters 8 and 11—12a. The relations on the next, or intermediate, level in this chiastic structure involve different trials which God's people experienced. The trials described in chapters 3 and 6 were on a personal level. Those described in the prayer of chapter 9 and the experience of chapter 10 were on a more corporate level. Nevertheless, there is a similarity in the personnel immediately involved: Daniel's friends (chap. 3), Daniel alone (chaps. 6 and 9a), and Daniel and his friends (chap. 10).

In Daniel 9 the prophet felt that the time had come for his people to return to their land, but that had not yet happened. His expectancy provided him with good reason to pray for the deliverance of his people from exile. In chapter 10 the prophet mourned and fasted because some reversals had come to the people of God. These problems most likely had to do with the suspension of the temple construction in Jerusalem due to opposition (cf. Ezra 4:1-4).

At the top of the chiasm in the first half of Daniel two prophecies given personally to two Neo-Babylonian monarchs appear. The second half of the book does not provide full narratives of a similar nature. However, it does provide some prophetic statements about the activity of certain foreign rulers. The action of a Persian king gave the orders that sent Ezra and Nehemiah back to Jerusalem to commence and to carry out its reconstruction, as predicted in 9:25. A Roman ruler launched the war which brought about the destruction of Jerusalem (A.D. 70) as predicted in 9:27. Thus, these abbreviated elements in this prophecy take the place of the more extended narratives about individual kings in the first half of the book.

In spite of the various similarities between the contents of the chiastic structures in the first and second halves of Daniel, one striking difference stands out. There is no cap to the chiastic literary pyramid in the first half of the book. But there is a cap to the one in the second half.

The first chiasm is made up of an even number of balancing elements (three pairs of them). On the other hand, the second chiasm is made up of an uneven number of elements in its outline. This feature provides the second half of the book with an apex or central block atop its chiastic pyramid that is supported by its three literary pairs. At this apex the literary structure of the second half of the book concentrates upon the Messiah and His death.

As we have observed previously, one of the main purposes for which chiastic structures were utilized was to accent their central elements. Thus, the greatest emphasis of the book of Daniel (in terms of its overall literary structure) comes out here. Towering over the wrecks of time, raised up between heaven and earth, the Messiah is found here, dying alone and rejected but providing atonement and everlasting righteousness in that solitary death. This is the Mount Everest, the literary summit of the book, and here we meet Jesus Christ as the suffering and dying Messiah.

Theology of Daniel 9:24-27

The preceding discussions of the literary structure of Daniel 9:24-27 have portrayed the Messiah as the central focus of this prophecy. That same point can also be deducted simply from the amount of information about Him that the passage provides. From our exegesis of the prophecy eight points can be made about the Messiah.

- 1. The Messiah (by means of His death) would make final atonement for sin (vs. 24c).
- 2. By His atoning death, the Messiah would bring in everlasting righteousness to mankind (vs. 24d).
- 3. The everlasting righteousness provided by that atonement was to be ministered to its recipients from a new sanctuary—the heavenly sanctuary. The inauguration of that sanctuary is referred to in verses 24–25 as the anointing of an holy of holies.
 - 4. The Messiah was to appear and be anointed for the service of His public ministry at a particular time—in A.D. 27—according to the chronology worked out above for verse 25b.
 - 5. Sometime during the seventieth week the Messiah was to die (vs. 26a). However, His death would not be a natural one for He was to be cut off by some other person or persons. He was to be killed.
 - 6. The Messiah would die alone, abandoned and rejected (vs. 26b).
 - 7. During the final week of this prophecy, the Messiah would strengthen the covenant God had made with His people (vs. 27a).
 - 8. In the midst of the final week, at the time when He was to die, the Messiah would bring the sacrificial service of the temple to an end as far as its theological significance was concerned (vs. 27b).

From this review it can be seen that the prophecy truly is, in Daniel's terminology, Messianocentric. Looking at the events predicted in Daniel through the eyes of the NT, we see their fulfillments in the career, death, resurrection, ascension, and present ministration of Jesus Christ. Examined from this point of view, this passage can be identified as a deeply Christocentric prophecy.

A prominent part of the experience of the Messiah described by this prophecy points to His death: (1) the nature of that death (He was to be killed by somebody else), (2) His experience in that death (abandoned and rejected), and (3) the results that were to flow from that death (atonement, righteousness; an end to the old sanctuary ministration, and the commencement of a new sanctuary ministration). The emphasis upon the Messiah and His experience ranks this passage alongside the other great Messianic prophecies of the OT that point to Him as the suffering servant of God (Ps 22, Isa 53).

But this prophecy is not just a statement about God's work through His suffering Servant. His experience was not worked out in a vacuum; it was worked out in relationship to God's people. Thus, 9:24-27 is a prophecy about both God and man.

On the manward side of this prophecy we see first that Daniel's prayer was to be answered. God's people would return to their land and rebuild their temple and city. The blessings of the covenant would return to them again. With a return to these more favorable circumstances there would come upon them a new responsibility, a responsibility to respond in obedience to the God who had kept His covenant with them. This idea is expressed elsewhere in the OT by the analogy that the return from exile would represent a new Exodus.

Part of their obligations would be physical responsibilities. They would be the ones to rebuild the ruined temple and city. This work would not be easy. It would be accomplished in troublous times, that is, with opposition. This was indeed the case in the experience of the community of Judah under Ezra and Nehemiah.

Then we come to the Messiah in relation to His people. Just as the references to the Messiah mark the center of this prophecy in terms of its literary structure, so His coming demarcated a great divide in His people's experience. Two opportunities faced them. At the beginning of this prophecy they were exhorted to prepare for His coming by putting away sin and the rebellious spirit that had led to their first exile. In short, they were to develop a righteous society that would be fit to welcome Him.

Failure to develop a righteous society would result in dire consequences. The outcome of this prophecy is very Deuteronomic in character. The avenues through which God's people could avail themselves of either the blessing or the curse of the covenant were open to them. Unfortunately, the prophecy ends on a negative and tragic note.

The people of God are foreseen to fail to put away that rebellious spirit which previously had afflicted them. There would still be a deep current of sin in the camp when the Messiah came. These failures are foretold as resulting in their rejection of Him. Other consequences would follow in the train of this unfortunate choice. They would run their inexorable course until the city and the temple that were to be rebuilt (according to earlier statements in this prophecy) would lie in ruins (according to concluding statements in the same prophecy). It was not predestined by God to happen in this way, but it was foreseen that this sequence would occur in the course of events.

A third party appears on the scene of action toward the end of this prophecy. This party is known as the "desolator." Historically, this role was fulfilled by the forces of Imperial Rome that brought the city and temple to an end and left them desolate.

Parallels to this kind of experience can be found elsewhere in the OT. Assyria was sometimes looked upon by the prophets as an instrument God employed to judge the northern kingdom of Israel. Babylon also was sometimes looked upon as an instrument with which the southern kingdom of Judah was judged.

Just because they were allowed to fulfill God's purpose on occasion, however, these nations were not to go unpunished. They too were to be judged, as is pointed out quite clearly in the prophecies against the foreign nations that are found in the writings of various OT prophets. One way the final phrase of Daniel's prophecy has been interpreted would bring such consequences upon Rome also.

Daniel 9:24-27 is thus a prophecy about God and a Man and men. The Man of God's own choosing here was the Messiah who would come to do His work on earth and then in heaven. The first group of men who come into view are God's own people. A great opportunity is offered to them at the beginning of this prophecy. By the end of the same prophecy it becomes evident, however, that they will not receive the blessings that would have come from their fulfilling the responsibilities accompanying that opportunity. As a result, a second group of men are seen coming on the scene. Their actions would be adverse to the professed people of God since they would desolate their city and temple.

This prophecy appears to end on a somber note. It should be recalled, however, that the great provisions for the salvation of mankind provided through the work of the Messiah were to continue in operation beyond that time. These include the righteousness brought in by His atonement and His ongoing ministration in the heavenly sanctuary.

It is this connection with the heavenly sanctuary that especially ties in the prophecy with the other lines of prophecy in the book of Daniel. For parallels, we see a daily ministration in the heavenly sanctuary that belongs to a Prince of the host (chap. 8). And we see a Son of man figure bringing a judgment to a conclusion in that same heavenly temple (chap. 7).

The Messiah who makes atonement for sin by His death (chap. 9), and who, as Prince of the host, performs priestly service in the heavenly sanctuary (chap. 8), is also the Son of man who receives universal dominion and a kingdom that will never pass away. The apparent defeat recorded in chap. 9 is softened by the assurance of ultimate victory recorded in chapter 7 which precedes it.

CHAPTER IV

The Meaning of kipper in Daniel 9:24

Pierre Winandy

Editorial synopsis. The Hebrew phrase, lekappēr 'āwôn, stands at the center of the literary structure of Daniel 9:24. "To make reconciliation for iniquity" is the rendering of the KJV. Two modern versions with similar phrasing give: "to atone for iniquity" (RSV); "to atone for wickedness" (NIV). In this manner the central fact of the Christian faith was foretold in prophecy. When the coming Messiah should be "cut off," His death would make atonement or reconciliation for iniquity and would thereby bring in "everlasting righteousness."

The key word in this Hebrew expression is the verb $k\bar{a}par$ which appears in this passage in its intensive or Piel form as kipper. The kpr root of this term occurs 139 times in the OT, mainly in the Piel form. Although nearly all occurrences appear in the context of Israel's sanctuary worship system, older lexicons (and some later authoritative works as well) have interpreted its religious meaning through one instance of a secular use in Genesis 6:14. In this passage the verb (utilized only this once in the Hebrew Qal form) is employed to describe Noah's task of *coating* the ark with pitch. Thus, it has been inferred that the basic meaning of kpr is "to cover" and that its religious use in the Piel form should carry the same meaning.

In the light of more recent studies the author dissents from this older view. Scholarly study has focused on *kipper* in the context of numerous passages in the OT that employ the term in connection with the sanctuary rituals and in the Hebrew designation of the mercy seat of the ark. Parallel terms in the cognate languages and the use of *kipper* in Jewish literature and the Dead Sea Scrolls have been examined also.

These studies demonstrate that in its cultic or religious usage *kipper* means to expiate or to wipe away through sacrifice. It does not carry the idea of covering up something. Thus, the focus of the central phrase in 9:24 is on the greatest of all sacrifices, the death of the Lamb of God, that accomplished a full expiation, a complete wiping away of sin.

Chapter Outline

- I. Introduction
- II. Non-Religious Use of kpr
- III. Religious Meaning of kpr
- IV. kipper and Daniel 9:24

Introduction

Various understandings of the meaning of *kipper* (from the three-letter root, *kpr*) have led to variant theological interpretations. Dictionaries or lexicons do not provide much help since they often apply arbitrarily the meaning of the Qal form of this root in Genesis 6:14 (*kāpar*) to the Piel form (*kipper*) which is the usual form found in the religious context of the sanctuary. Consequently, we must examine the religious use of this term in order to determine more accurately its true meaning in such contexts. But first we will note its meaning in a non-religious sense in the OT.

Non-Religious Use of Kpr

1. Genesis 6:14. Only a few examples of a non-religious use of this root occur in the OT. We examine two examples. Genesis 6:14 is the only case where the root is conjugated in the Hebrew simple active or Qal form: "So make yourself an ark of cypress wood; make rooms in it and coat [kpr = kāpar] it with pitch inside and out." 1

As the NIV has rightly rendered, the ark is not "covered" with pitch (in the sense of receiving a "cover" or a "covering"), but is "coated." In other words the pitch is "smeared" upon the ark. This meaning of the Qal form introduces very well the notion of "rubbing" that is often found in the intensive active Piel form of the verb in cognate languages. We shall come back later to this notion.

2. Genesis 32:20. "And be sure to say, 'Your servant Jacob is coming behind us.' For he thought, 'I will pacify [kpr = kipper] him with these gifts I am sending on ahead.' "The expression rendered by the NIV: "I will pacify him" could not be literally rendered, "I shall cover his face." The context already excludes the literal rendering "to cover" the face, for the simple reason that the sentence continues by saying (literally), "and afterward I shall see [or look at] his face."

It is interesting to note that the *Targum* of Samuel renders this: "I shall 'polish' his face." Rashi explains (in the same place) that when the Hebrew word *kāpar* precedes the words, "sin," "iniquity," and "face," it should be translated "wipe away," as in Aramaic and in the *Talmud*. The Arabs say in fact "to clear," "to whiten the face" if they wish "to honor" or "to appease" someone.

These two texts, therefore, cannot be used as a basic proof that the first, literal meaning of $k\bar{a}par$, "to cover," should determine the applied idea of this same term when it is used in its Piel form in priestly settings. The appearance of this verb in the OT is almost always in the religious setting of the sanctuary and in the Hebrew intensive active and passive forms of the verb (Piel and Pual)

Religious Meaning of Kpr

This verb root occurs 139 times in the OT. Since several exegetes have made extensive investigation of its uses, we shall limit ourselves to summarizing the conclusions suggested.

Insights From Context

It is recognized that one of the rare contexts which can clarify the meaning of the root is Leviticus 17:11. B. A. Levine offers the following translation in which he inserts the noun form of the verb (kōper, sometimes translated "ransom," Exod 21:30) as the intent of the infinitive form of the same verb which actually appears in the text (lekappēr).

For the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have assigned it to you to serve as expiation (kōper) for your lives (lekappēr 'al napšōtêkem) on the altar, for the blood may expiate according to the value of life.

He explains further:

the Beth [the Hebrew letter for "b"] in the word bannepeš [for your souls/lives] is Beth pretii "of price." The sense is that blood can [substitute] for life to the extent required to ransom it, redeem it.... The underlying conception here is the role of blood as the life force. As such, blood can serve as a substitute for life, pars pro toto. The second part of Leviticus 17:11, if properly understood, expresses this notion clearly....³

As Levine had earlier noted, "The $k\bar{o}per$ is thus a substitute for a life (Exod 30:12; Isa 43:3)."

Two other paragraphs summarize Levine's conclusions on the meaning of this root in the Piel form (kipper) as it is used in many OT passages:

As we have seen, *kipper* means: "to perform rites of expiation. Its usage in the priestly sources is almost always associated with the expiatory sacrifices, the ḥaṭṭā'ṭ and the 'āšām. It follows that the use of blood in such activities must be understood as expiatory or purificatory in purpose.⁵

Despite some persisting ambiguities in the classification of the Akkadian data, it should be possible to demonstrate quite convincingly that biblical Hebrew *kipper* and related forms do not reflect the motif of covering or concealing sins, but rather the sense of cleansing, and the elimination which results from it.⁶

While many texts could be cited, two others (in addition to Leviticus 17:11) should be noted:

Ezekiel 43:20: "You are to take some of its blood ... and so purify the altar and make atonement [kipper] for it."

Leviticus 16:30: "... atonement will be made [kipper] for you, to cleanse you."

Not the slightest allusion to covering is made in these passages. On the other hand, a clear relationship between atonement and purification is indisputably expressed.

Significance of the Kapporet (Mercy Seat)

The word *kappōret* is a feminine noun from the *kpr* root. It literally means "performance of reconciliation/atonement," but is translated in our common version as "mercy seat." The *kappōret* was the center of the important rites of the Yôm Kippur (Day of Atonement). It is in the light of these ceremonies that the significance of the *kappōret* can be determined.

On the Day of Atonement the high priest twice approached the *kappōret* with sacrificial blood: (1) "He [Aaron] is to take some of the bull's blood and with his finger sprinkle it on the front of the atonement cover [*kappōret*]" (vs. 14). (2) "He shall ... take its [goat's] blood behind the curtain and do with it as he did with the bull's blood: He shall sprinkle it on the atonement cover [*kappōret*] and in front of it. In this way he will make atonement of the Most Holy Place because of the uncleanness and rebellion of the Israelites, whatever their sins have been" (vss. 15–16).

God Himself spoke to Moses from "above the atonement cover" (Num 7:89). It was, in this sense, the solemn seat of His holy, perfect, and pure divine majesty. Within the ark and beneath the *kappōret* rested the tables of His Law, the Ten Commandments. The Day of Atonement sacrificial blood was sprinkled upon and before the *kappōret* was thus the *receptacle* for receiving the expiating blood, blood which produced a *cleansing*, a wiping away, a purifying, a pardoning by redemption, of confessed sins.

In all these ceremonies no allusion is made to an idea that sins would be "hidden" in the ark so that the kappōret would be thought to "cover" sins. The absurdity of such a situation is evident when pushed to its extreme application.

We would agree with the latest edition (1981) of the Brown Driver Briggs dictionary: "the old explanation cover, lid has no justification in usage."

Meaning of the Kpr Root in Cognate Languages

I summarize briefly my conclusions from previous research.8

The Assyrian kapāru means (1) to wipe off; (2) to smear, kuppuru: wipe off, clear objects, to rub, purify magically, expiate.

In the first form the Arabic verb has the meaning to "cover, hide"; and in the spiritual order, the unfaithful one "covers" truth in denying it or attempts to put a veil upon his fault in such a way that the offended will not see anything that irritates him. In the second form, however, *kafara* has exactly the meaning of the Hebrew *kipper*—atone. It is known that the sacerdotal or priestly use of the Hebrew word is in the voice corresponding to the second form of the verb in Arabic.

Medebielle¹⁰ observes that there exists:

Between *kuppuru* [Assyrian] and *kipper* a much closer affinity than between Arabic and Hebrew, not only the same verbal form is used, ... but the same ritual term is applied in the same circumstances expecting identical results. Without doubt ceremonies differ; the Israelitic liturgy excludes all magical procedure used by the Assyro-Babylonians. But nothing prevented to keep an intensive expression which, by itself, simply described religious acts which used to reestablish people and things in their primitive purity."

It is beyond the discussion of this short chapter to determine which language borrowed the vocabulary and culture from the other. What should be noted is the common meaning of the root.

Schrank, after establishing the possible connection between *kipper* and the Babylonian *kuppuru*, a blotting away as a medical act (rubbing the body) or magical (expulsion of demons), states that if facts do not permit an assimilation with biblical expiation, the meaning of the root is common.

Dhorme¹² comments that "from 'rubing' the meaning passed to 'purify' and 'free' because friction used to purify the place soiled by sickness and sin, or freed from spirit possession."

Incidentally, the same development of thought can be observed here as in the OT between the Qal from the verb in Genesis 6:14 ("to rub") and the sacerdotal service. The Akkadian verb kaparu has for its first meaning, "To wipe away, to erase, to clear" and for derived meanings, especially with its D form, kuppuru, "to purify (through magic)," "to wipe away."

Translation of Kpr by the Ancient Versions

The Septuagint (the Greek translation of the Hebrew Scriptures, third-second century B.C.) renders the kpr root by such verbs as hilaskomai ("propitiate"), katharizō ("cleanse, purify"), hagiazō ("to sanctify, purify"). These three terms relate to propitiation or purification.

The Vulgate renders kapporet by propitiatorium. In Syriac, kafar signifies "to wipe, to erase"; and at the Pael kappar: "purify, absolve, destroy"; and its derived form: "purification, forgiveness."

Use of Kpr in the Dead Sea Scrolls

I have analyzed the 17 texts in the Dead Sea Scrolls¹³ where this root is used. No instance was found with the connotation of covering. In each case the meaning pertained to purifying, expiation, the forgiveness of sin.

Use of *Kpr* in Jewish Literature

As noted above, Rashi held that kpr in front of the words "sin" and "iniquity" should be translated "wipe away," as in Aramaic and the Talmud.

Scholarly Opinion on the Meaning of Kpr

Three authoritative scholars will now be quoted:

- 1. Schotz:¹⁴ "Even if kafar at some places could be translated by 'to cover,' in the ritual of sacrifice this meaning has no place ... in all cases where Jahweh himself is the subject of the act of kafar, the meaning is to wipe away (wegwischen)."
- 2. Moraldi: 15 concludes his study on *kipper* by stating that the word has no connection with the idea of "to cover." The notion is to obliterate, wipe away through a sacrifice. Such an expiation has for result the destruction of what is contrary to divine holiness and the reestablishment of the union with the God of the covenant.
- 3. Von Rad: "Even if it were absolutely certain that the fundamental meaning of the root kafar is 'to cover,' the question would remain what is covered and how this 'covering' is operated. We have reached the point of observing (arrived to observe) that kipper is a technical expression of cult.... As technical cultural term it simply signifies: 'to accomplish an expiatory action.' ..."

Summary

From the foregoing data we may safely say that in a context of priestly activity *kpr*—or more directly its Piel form, *kipper*—never has the meaning of "covering." Rather, the emphasis is on expiation realized by a redemptive sacrifice of divine origin which wipes away the sins of the sinner, purifies him in such a way that he can maintain his relationship with the holy God of the covenant.

However, it is correct to recognize that once sin has been pardoned by a priestly ministration, it may be considered "covered." For example, the psalmist addresses God by saying, "You forgave the iniquity of your people and covered (kissāh) all their sins" (Ps 85:2). But although kipper, "to wipe away/purify," is often associated with such terms as $m\bar{a}h\bar{a}h$, "wipe away" (Neh 3:3–7; Ps 51:1, 9), $n\bar{a}s\bar{a}$, "take away" (Exod 10:17; Lev 10:17), and $s\hat{u}r$, "put away" (Isa 6:7), it never is associated with $k\bar{a}s\bar{a}h$, "to cover."

This brings us to the conclusion that if God, in His love, "covers" sin, it should not be viewed as a priestly act. Such statements simply reflect an attitude of mercy toward the sinner which should by no means be associated with, or confounded with, the necessary expiation.

kipper and Daniel 9:24

Gabriel's statement lists several matters that would be under focus during the 70 weeks. One of the most important of these was "to atone for wickedness" (lekappēr 'āwôn)." Three points in the general context can assist us in grasping the precise implications of kipper in this expression.

- 1. The poetic structure of verse 24 has brought together three substantives having to do with sin: transgression (peša'), sins (ḥaṭṭ'ôṭ), and iniquity ('āwôn). These terms show a linkage to the Levitical sanctuary system of types and indicates the moment has come in the prophecy to deal with the sin problem in a final manner.
 - 2. The vocabulary of the broad context (chaps. 8, 9) seems clearly to indicate a cultic concern: sanctuary, holy city, covenant, righteousness, perpetual, Messiah, etc.
 - 3. Verses 26-27 of the pericope refer to a particular moment in time for the "cutting off" of a "messiah" when "sacrifice and offering" would be "put to an end."

These three complementary elements in the context seem to point to a precise sacerdotal, salvific activity to solve the problem of sin. Therefore, if these premises are accepted, the third expression of Daniel 9:24 ("to atone for wickedness") would involve much more than a vague ethical aspect. It would definitely imply an act of sacrifice when the expiation or the wiping out of human sin in a radical and definite manner would take place. As Christians we believe that Calvary was that precise act which became the basis of the Saviour's priestly ministry.

EXEGETICAL STUDIES IN LEVITICUS

Literary Structure: Emphasizes Day of Atonement
Transfer of Sin
Contamination/Purification of the Sanctuary

INTRODUCTORY NOTE

The following essays form a trilogy of theological reflection on Leviticus, the third book of Moses. The first emphasizes the implications of its literary structure on the interpretation of the sanctuary ritual, especially on the interpretation of the Day of Atonement legislation. The second examines the concept of the transfer of sin from the penitent to the sanctuary. The third essay explores the issues involved in both the legal and illegal contamination of the sanctuary and its purification on the Day of Atonement.

Thus, the three essays combine to provide the necessary biblical backdrop to the studies on Daniel, particularly to its central prophecy that deals with the cleansing and restoration of the heavenly sanctuary.

CHAPTER V

Literary Form and Theological Function in Leviticus

William H. Shea

Editorial synopsis. The thesis of this essay is that the literary form of a given portion of inspired Scripture was designed to help explain its mesage. So it is affirmed that "form complements function."

Leviticus is a well-organized piece of Mosaic instruction. The evidence presented in this essay suggests that the entire book has been written in a literary configuration known as a chiasmus. A chiasmus (or chiasm, as it is more commonly termed) is a literary device that unifies a composition by arranging its corresponding parts in an inverted relationship to each other.

In this instance Leviticus naturally divides into halves (chaps. 1-15, 16-27). In the first half three discrete sections—cultic legislation (1-7), priestly history (8-10), and personal laws of uncleanness (11-15)—are seen to balance in an inverted relationship with three subject-related sections in the second half—personal moral laws (17-20), priestly legislation (21-22), cultic legislation (23-25). Two additional chapters (26-27) round out the book but stand outside the literary chiasm.

At the fulcrum of these two limbs (1–15 and 17–25) of the chiasm lies the legislation dealing with the Day of Atonement. A carefully thought-out literary arrangement such as this strongly underscores the unity of the work and indicates single authorship. An outline of the chiastic structure of Leviticus may be seen on page 148.

The fact that the Day of Atonement ritual lies at the literary center of Leviticus emphasizes its importance in the sanctuary system. Furthermore, this central position indicates its function as the capstone of the sacrificial rituals (presented in the first limb of the chiasm) and as the natural transition point to the subject of holy living (presented in the second limb).

Some insights suggested by the literary form may be summarized as follows:

- 1. The theological core of the first limb is oriented around the subject of justification ("You shall be holy; for I the Lord your God am holy," Lev 19:2). This basic design for spiritual experience offered to ancient Israel (in the setting of the earthly sanctuary symbolism) is still valid for God's people in the Christian era.
- 2. The literary and thematic position of the Day of Atonement legislation endorses the argument that the confessed sins of penitent Israelites were transferred to the sanctuary by means of their sin offerings. It is explicitly stated that the Day of Atonement ritual functioned to cleanse the sanctuary from the transgressions and uncleannesses of the children of Israel (Lev 16:16). Transgressions (Lev 1-7) and uncleannesses (Lev 11-15) are the two major concerns discussed in the first limb of the chiasm. Offenses in both areas were atoned for through the sacrifice of sin offerings during the year.

The Day of Atonement sin offering ritual (the Lord's goat)—the summary of all sin offering rituals—is now directed toward the sanctuary to cleanse it from these confessed offenses, a clear acknowledgment of a previous transfer from the people to the sanctuary.

3. The central position of the Day of Atonement in the Levitical legislation also places this ritual at the close of the book's major presentation on sacrifices. In such a position it may be seen as a kind of summary to the sacrificial system. This is especially true of the regular sin offerings since the main sacrifice on the Day of Atonement was itself a sin offering (the Lord's goat).

Several comparisons may be made between the two sets of sin offerings (the regular and the yearly). There are both similarities and differences. The Day of Atonement was corporate activity rather than individual. It appears to have been modeled after the regular sin offerings made in behalf of priests or of the congregation as a whole. The Day of Atonement sacrifice was offered in relationship to the corporate body of Israelites whose confessed sins and uncleannesses rested in the sanctuary. Its symbolic significance, therefore, extended beyond the individual.

4. The thematic link between the Day of Atonement sin offering (the Lord's goat) and the regular sin offerings is augmented if the term ḥaṭṭā'ôṭ in the key passages of Leviticus 16:16, 21 is translated "sin offerings" rather than "sins" (as in our common versions). A number of evidences are assembled in the essay to support this possibility.

If this translation is accepted, these verses indicate more clearly than otherwise that atonement was made on this special day to remove from the sanctuary the transgressions and uncleannesses repentant Israelites had transferred to it during the year through the regular sin offerings.

5. The literary and thematic position of the Day of Atonement sin offering (positioned last) in respect to the regular sin offerings (positioned first) in the "sacrificial" limb of the chiasm (chaps. 1–15) raises an important question. At what point in time did forgiveness and acceptance with God come to a repentant Israelite participating in the sanctuary system? Was he forgiven when he brought his private sin offering or when the Day of Atonement arrived?

The legislation in Leviticus 4–5 clearly indicates that when the penitent brought his sin offering to the sanctuary, confessing his sin, he was forgiven. Repeatedly the statement is made in substance: "the priest shall make atonement for him for the sin which he has committed, and he shall be forgiven" (Lev 5:10).

By contrast, no statement about forgiveness is ever given in the Day of Atonement legislation. The Day of Atonement had to do with forgiveness of the individual only in an indirect sense. This was a special ritual for the cleansing of the sanctuary. The individual who had accepted the divine provisions for forgiveness and who continued to walk humbly with God (who, in effect, had assumed his guilt through the sanctuary ritual) had done his part. He could trust that the cleansing of the sanctuary would be accomplished by the special ministry of the high priest on the Day of Atonement as God had instructed.

It is evident that the Day of Atonement ritual—by its capstone position in the sanctuary system and underscored by its literary center in Leviticus—was designed to focus attention of penitent Israel beyond the state of personal forgiveness and acceptance to the closing aspect of the divine plan to resolve the sin issue: the final day of judgment.

Chapter Outline

- I. Introduction
- II. Subject Content of Leviticus
- III. Literary Structure of Leviticus (Chiasmus)
- IV. Some Theological Insights
- V. Conclusions

Introduction

At first glance the casual observer might suggest that the biblical books of Leviticus and Daniel share nothing in common. Leviticus deals largely with legislation about the sacrificial system and other laws. On the other hand Daniel contains historical narratives and long-range outline prophecies describing the rise and fall of kingdoms down to the end of time.

On closer inspection, however, the reader will note important links between these two books. For example, according to the prophecy of Daniel 8 a prominent part of the struggle described between earthly and heavenly powers focuses upon the heavenly sanctuary and the ministration functioning therein. Since Leviticus contains more information about the whole sanctuary system than any other OT book, one naturally would expect it to shed some light upon the Daniel passage.

The purpose of this essay is to analyze the literary structure of Leviticus and to note some of the theological implications arising from its form. Such a study may serve to provide a useful backdrop to the book for further evaluation of its message.

The book of Leviticus is a rich treasure house of truth about the Israelite sanctuary and the system of salvation it portrayed in type during the era it functioned. An examination of this spiritual heritage should, therefore, offer assistance in studying the working out of salvation themes in the later literature of the OT and in the grand fulfillments of the NT.

Overview: Chapters 1-16

It is apparent from any review of the commentary literature on Leviticus that the book is well organized. Apart from a few minor differences the outlines of Leviticus printed by the Bible commentaries are similar. The book divides naturally into two halves—chapters 1–16 and 17–27. The first 15 chapter block, dealing with various apsects of the sacrificial system, is climaxed by the Day of Atonement legislation in chapter 16. The second half of the book takes on a different character. The heart of this section (chaps. 17–26) is referred to commonly as "the Holiness Code," because in these instructions a holy God calls His people to holy living.

1. Cultic legislation (chaps. 1–7). We now turn to examine the contents of the subsections of each half of Leviticus to discover what patterns may emerge. The initial seven chapters deal with cultic legislation pertaining to sacrifice. The legislation commences with a subsection touching on private burnt offerings (chap. 1), the accessory cereal offerings (chap. 2), and a class of sacrifices known as peace offerings (chap. 3).

The next subsection (4:1-5:13) deals with the important subject of the sin offering $(\frac{ha!!a}{t}, \frac{ha!!a}{t}, \frac{ha!!a$

The guilt offerings (3 asim) are the final class of sacrifices discussed (5:14-6:7). These appear to have had a more limited application than the previously mentioned sin offering. The persons are not classified, only their offenses. These are limited to three: defrauding the Lord in the matter of sacred things or gifts (5:15-16), inadvertent transgression of the Lord's commands done unawares (5:17-19), and testifying falsely under a solemn oath (6:1-7). The animals used in all three instances were young or adult sheep.

The text now turns to priestly regulations regarding the handling of these same sacrifices (6:8-7:38). The sequence is the same with the exception that the verses dealing with the peace offerings appear last (7:11-21, 28-34). Added to this subsection are special provisions for priests (7:8-10), some miscellaneous instructions for the people (7:22-27), and a summary and conclusion (7:35-38). This finalizes the first section of seven chapters dealing with sacrificial legislation. Its content forms a logically arranged and cohesive whole.

2. Priestly history (chaps. 8-10). The second main section of Leviticus covers only three chapters (8-10). It deals with the installation of Aaron and his sons as the priests who will officiate in the sanctuary. The subject matter of the passage divides into four parts: (1) a prologue of instructions (8:1-5); (2) a description of the commencement of the installation ceremony (8:6-36); (3) a description of the conclusion of the ceremony which came a week later (chap. 9); and (4) an epilogue (chap. 10).

This last chapter describes the inappropriate activity of the newly made priests, Nadab and Abihu, and their summary execution by God (10:1-11). After a few verses of priestly legislation (10:12-15), the passage closes with a historical narrative about Moses' investigation into the matter of whether the sin offering had been handled in the correct manner (10:16-20).

It is evident, therefore, that this entire three-chapter section deals with the main topic of the high priest and his family into office. It follows that topic through in logical steps.

Some commentators have been puzzled to find regulations dealing with the sacrifices repeated in chapters 6–7 when they had been dealt with in the preceding legislation.² I would suggest that the contents of chapters 8–10 provide a partial explanation for this feature of the text. Chapters 6–7 have to do with how the priests were to deal with the sacrifices in their ministry for the people. But the emphasis in the preceding instruction was upon the people and the part they played in offering those sacrifices. Furthermore, this emphasis on the priests in chapters 6–7 leads logically into the topic of chapters 8–10.

In a sense, therefore, chapters 6–7 anticipate chapters 8–10. On the other hand they look back on one special aspect of the contents of chapters 1–5. They are not repetitious in a manner that detracts from the purpose of the book. Rather, they add a new dimension to the subject under discussion and make possible a natural transition between two parts.

3. Personal laws of uncleanness (chaps. 11–15). The third major section of Leviticus takes up the subject of uncleanness (†āmē', verb) and its treatment. The chapters in this section deal successively with unclean animals (chap. 11); uncleanness arising from childbirth (chap. 12); unclean diseases (chap. 13); cleansing from such diseases (chap. 14); and unclean discharges (chap. 15).

Since this section will be referred to again, some brief remarks will provide a background. For coming in contact with unclean animals, the Israelite was unclean until evening and was to cleanse himself by bathing and washing his clothes (11:27-28, 31-32).

Purification from uncleanness arising in connection with childbirth or discharges required the sacrificing of burnt offerings and sin offerings (12:6–8; 15:15, 30). Purification from the state of leprosy involved the full sacrificial spectrum: burnt offering, cereal offering, guilt offering ('āšām), and a sin offering (ḥaṭṭā't; 14:12–13, 19–23).

An important point to observe is that purification from uncleanness did not require a different kind of offering from that previously prescribed for sin. Sin offerings and burnt offerings were offered for both sin and the more serious kinds of uncleannesses. Once again, this section of Leviticus can be seen quite clearly as a coherent whole.

4. Day of Atonement (chap. 16). With chapter 16, the instruction for the Day of Atonement service, we reach the end of the legislation that presented the prescribed sacrifices. In this manner the Day of Atonement ritual serves as the culmination and climax to the sacrificial system outlined in Leviticus.

Chapter 16 also constitutes a major transition point in the book. Legislation now shifts to the requirements and obligations incumbent upon the one who observes God's laws. Thus the Day of Atonement capstone not only marks the apex of the sacrificial service legislation, but also demarcates the thematic center and turning point in the book of Leviticus.

Overview: Chapters 17-27

The second half of Leviticus has been called the Holiness Code. Its stipulations of obligation extend from chapters 17 through 25. Chapter 26 pronounces blessings or curses upon the obedient or disobedient. Chapter 27 concludes the book with certain laws regarding dedicatory vows.

There has been some discussion among commentators on whether a logical progression of instruction is present in the Holiness Code. For our present purpose we will assume that it does. One thing, however, is evident: the second half of the book contains a collection of similar kinds of legislation, and these are in contrast with the sacrificial legislation found in the first half.

Two more features bind these collections of laws together in the second half of Leviticus: (1) the use of the same type of introductory formulae for their respective sections, and (2) the theological impetus for their observance that appears in the recurrent statements, "You shall be holy; for I the Lord your God am holy" (Lev 19:2). Hence, the identification of this reasonably well-organized collection of laws as the Holiness Code.

Although some authorities continue to view Leviticus as the result of an evolution through successive stages³—a curious throwback to a past generation of scholarship—the evidence of its succinct organization, integrated literary and thematic structure gives support for its unity and single authorship.

Literary Structure of Leviticus (Chiasmus)

The present writer believes that the evidence makes it possible to go a step beyond the present organized outlines of Leviticus to be found in the commentaries. By using the content-units already identified by scholars in the past, we now are able to fit these sections into a literary configuration that is architectured even more precisely and aesthetically than has been appreciated previously.

This kind of literary form is called a chiasmus, a device that unifies a composition (in part or whole) by arranging its corresponding parts in an inverted relationship to each other. The present writer's suggestion is that the book of Leviticus (as a literary piece) can be fitted into one grand chiasm, spanning the entire book.

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The purpose for seeking the evidence that such a device actually was used by the Bible writer is theological. The theological connection is that the form of a writing complements its function. The medium definitely assists in conveying a

message and can contribute to its understanding.

The idea that chiasms may be found in the book of Leviticus is not new. A number of examples have been isolated. Wenham notes four in his commentary on Leviticus (in chapters 8, 15, 20, 24). His analysis of Leviticus 24:16–22 may be cited as typical.⁴

A resident alien and native Israelite (vs. 16)

B take a man's life (vs. 17)

C take an animal's life (vs. 18)

D whatever he did, must be done to him (vs. 19)

D' whatever ... must be done to him (vs. 20)

C' kill an animal (vs. 21a)

B' kill a man (vs. 21b)

The use of the chiasmus as a literary device is common in the OT. It appears to have been employed frequently to bring out the unity of a double-sided event. The large chiasmus suggested for Leviticus would likewise emphasize the

Procedures for Determining the Chiasmus

unity of the entire book.

A' resident alien and native Israelite (vs. 22)

There are several different points from which one may proceed to determine a chiastic structure: (1) from the opposite ends of a given passage, (2) from its middle, or (3) from potentially balancing elements of a similar nature that may be distributed along the parallel limbs of a chiasm.

In the case of Leviticus we have a ready-made starting point from which to work, namely, the central legislative piece dealing with the Day of Atonement (chap. 16). Since this narrative ends the first major thematic section of the book (and thus introduces the second), it can be used as the fulcrum from which to work to the opposite ends of the chiasm. The location of the Day of Atonement legislation is thereby significant both structurally and theologically.

The two halves of the book that extend in both directions from this central point (Lev 16) consist of cultic legislation in the first instance (chaps. 1–15) and moral and ethical legislation in the second (chaps. 17–27). Already these elements alone can be seen to balance each other to some extent as the two limbs of the chiasmus, but now they must be examined for further correspondences. We will begin by examining the *central* block of material located in each of the proposed limbs of our chiasmus.

1. B' Priestly legislation (chaps. 21-22). When the two halves of Leviticus (1-15; 17-27) are examined individually, it becomes evident that neither is uniform in content. In particular the cultic legislation of the first half (chaps. 1-15) is broken up by the historical narrative depicting the *priesthood* and the installation of Aaron and his sons in that office (chaps. 8-10). An examination of the Holiness Code indicates that there is *also* a specific section within the second half of the book that deals with the priesthood, namely, chapters 21-22. This material is subdivided into three parts.

The first part (Lev 21:1–22:9) touches on the personal, social, and physical requirements a priest had to satisfy in order to be acceptable for the office. He had to avoid things that could defile him. He had to be circumspect in his marital life, and he had to be physically sound.

The purity that the functioning priesthood was to maintain is underscored in this passage by the terms used to designate impurity. For example, in these 33 verses the Hebrew word for "defile(ment)" occurs five times; the word for "profane" appears four times; and the word for "unclean(ness)" is attested three times. This terminology sounds very much like that found in Leviticus 11–15. However, the aspects of uncleanness identified there for the Israelite worshiper has been adapted now to meet the cases of the priests.

The second part (Lev 22:10–16), on the other hand, has more connections with what is found in Leviticus 5–7. For example, there is the case of tampering with the sacred gifts. This sounds a note similar to that given in the first of the three cases cared for by the guilt offering in the first half of the book (Lev 5:15–16). Even the restoration of 20 percent more than what was defrauded is common to the two passages (cf. 5:16 and 22:14).

The final section (Lev 22:17–33) has to do with the qualifications of animals acceptable for sacrificial offerings. Here is another set of instructions to regulate the priestly conduct of the sacrificial system. This is much like Leviticus 6–7 where the sacrifices are reviewed in order to describe in more detail how the priests should handle them.

So when we look for a passage from the second half of the book that would be parallel content-wise with Leviticus 8–10 (priestly history), we encounter Leviticus 21–22 (priestly legislation). The first of these two chapters (21) deals with how the priest should avoid becoming unclean, and thus, is like those provisions that are applied to the Israelite worshiper in Leviticus 11–15. The second (chap. 22) provides further instructions for the priestly management of the sacrificial system and has similarity to the instructions found in Leviticus 5–7.

Leviticus 8–10 preserves the historical narrative describing the installation of the first priests. Since the installation occurred only once, it is not repeated in the second half of the book. What the author has done in terms of literary structure, however, has been to locate in a parallel position in the last half of the book a block of legislative material that dealt with the priests who had been installed and the conditions they should meet in order to be consecrated.

It is of interest to note that not only does the priestly legislation in the second half (Lev 21–22) have a parallel relationship to the priestly history in the first half (Lev 8–10), but also there is an inverse relationship of this same block of material to chapters 1–7 and 11–15. The issue of priestly uncleanness is dealt with first (Lev 21), because uncleanness was the last topic discussed in the first half of the book (Lev 11–15). The priestly supervision of sacrifices is discussed last (Lev 22), because matters of sacrifice had been dealt with first in the earlier half of the book (Lev 1–7). These relationships are chiastically related to each other as A:B::B:A.

2. A' Cultic legislation (chaps. 23–25). We now turn our attention to the body of legislation found in Leviticus 23–25 which we may identify as cultic in character. Here we find laws for the observance of the festivals (Lev 23), for the priests' ministry in connection with the sacred furnishings within the first apartment of the tabernacle (Lev 24:1–9), and for the observation of the Sabbatical and Jubilee years (Lev 25). In essence, Leviticus 23–25 contains two subsections of cultic legislation. One section deals with the Sabbath and festivals conducted throughout the year (Sabbath; spring and fall festivals). The other dealt with periodic festivals that came every seventh and fiftieth year (Sabbatical Year; Jubilee Year).

These two kinds of festival legislation (Lev 23, 25) are related in that the second is modeled to some degree after the first. For example, the weekly Sabbath (Lev 23:1–3) is expanded into the Sabbatical Year (Lev 25:1–7). Likewise, the Feast of Weeks—Pentecost (Lev 23:15–21)—is expanded into the Jubilee Year (Lev 25:8–55). Similar ideas are repeated again, but they are given different application.

This is also the kind of relationship existing between Leviticus 1–5 and Leviticus 6–7 in the first half of the book. For example, five main sacrifices are given twice. But the first time (chaps. 1–5) they are surveyed from the viewpoint of the person offering the sacrifice; the second time (chaps. 6–7) they are looked at from the viewpoint of the priest officiating at the sacrifice. Both groups of material are cultic inasmuch as they deal with the sacrificial system.

In like manner, both groups of material found at the end of the book (chaps. 23–25) are cultic in character, although the aspects of the cult that they deal with are quite different. The extensive list of sacrifices offered at the festivals (see Numbers 28–29) clearly illustrates the close connections between the sacrifices of Leviticus 1–7 and the festivals of Leviticus 23–25.

Between these two chapters dealing with the two kinds of festivals is Leviticus 24. Verses 1–9 contain some legislation dealing with the tabernacle; verses 10–23 record a historical narrative. No literary unit is found between Leviticus 1–5 and 6–7 that corresponds to these materials. However, some links or relationships may be detected if the material is examined more closely.

Leviticus 24:1–9 provides instructions for the priestly care of the golden lampstand with its seven lamps and the table with its bread, both located in the holy place. To service these objects, it was necessary for the priest to enter the

tabernacle on a regular basis. He also had to enter the tabernacle in connection with certain sacrifices and to sprinkle the blood before the inner veil and to impress some of it upon the horns of the altar of incense (Lev 4:5–7, 17–18).

There were three articles of furniture in the holy place. The legislation of Leviticus 4 refers to the ministry of the priest in connection with the altar of incense, while Leviticus 24 refers to his ministry in connection with the lampstand

and the table. Thus, the two passages in either half of the book complement each other and fill out the picture. Although there is no directly corresponding structural unit in Leviticus 1–7 to balance Leviticus 24, a thematic correspondence is present in that both sections refer to the same location for ministry, the holy place with its three articles of furniture.

Another aspect of the relationship between Leviticus 1–7 and Leviticus 22–25 is the numerical progression they demonstrate. For example, in the sacrifices of Leviticus 1–7 five are listed in the first subsection (chaps 1–5). Two more

Another aspect of the relationship between Leviticus 1–7 and Leviticus 23–25 is the numerical progression they demonstrate. For example, in the sacrifices of Leviticus 1–7 five are listed in the first subsection (chaps. 1–5). Two more are added in the second subsection (chaps. 6–7): the offering by the high priest on the anniversary of his inauguration (Lev 6:20–23) and the praise offering (Lev 7:12–21).

In the Leviticus 23–25 passage seven festivals are mentioned in the first subsection (Lev 23). These are not repeated in the second subsection (Lev 25); but two more elements are added: the Sabbatical Year and the Jubilee Year. Thus, the sacrifices start with five and add two more to make seven. On the other hand, the festivals start with seven and add two more. But the festivals were not repeated when those two were added, so there is, in a sense, a decrease, not an increase. This results in a crescendo: :decrescendo numerical pattern between these two blocks of material.

In Leviticus 24:10-23 the author briefly diverges from cultic concerns to recount an event that occurred in Israel's migration involving a case of blasphemy. A man of part Israelite descent was found guilty of cursing God and was stoned for his crime. The narrative appears to disrupt the cultic legislation recorded in Leviticus 23-25. In one sense this is true, but the event also becomes the occasion for the giving of further legislation.

Be that as it may, in terms of literary structure it is more important to notice the *nature* of this material. It is primarily a recital of a historical episode. Only secondarily does it relate to the giving of laws on that occasion. Although Leviticus is cast in a historical frame (as commentators have emphasized),⁵ the actual recital of historical events is rare. It has been pointed out that there are only two historical narratives recorded in the entire book (Lev 8–10; 24:10–23).⁶ What should be emphasized here about these two narratives is that they occur in different halves of the book and thereby balance each other. They do not correspond directly in terms of their location within the book's chiastic structure, but they do balance each other in making up the content of each half of Leviticus with one historical narrative.

3. C' Personal moral laws (chaps. 17–20). The final elements of the book that require comparison are the sections in Leviticus 11–15 (first half of the book) and Leviticus 17–20 (second half). Whereas chapters 11–15 deal with personal laws of uncleanness, chapters 17–20 touch on personal moral laws.

Both blocks of material start with legislation on food. Leviticus 11 deals with different aspects of animals, fish, birds, etc., that make them unclean. After leading into this subject by means of some concluding remarks on sacrificial animals, Leviticus 17 adds the prohibition that the blood of no animal should be eaten. The passage from Leviticus 17:15–16 about contact with dead animals is almost a direct quote from Leviticus 11:39–40. Also the penalty and the instruction for rectification are the same in both cases.

The uncleanness section from the first half of the book continues then with laws about childbirth (Lev 12). The moral laws in the second half of the book continue with instruction on the related subject of marriage (Lev 18).

Leviticus 13–14:32 takes up the diagnosis and treatment (ritual) of 21 different skin diseases of man and three more for garments, giving a total of two dozen miscellaneous cases. Leviticus 19 takes up a series of two dozen different and miscellaneous laws drawn from the Ten Commandments.⁷

Another balancing of materials may be seen in Leviticus 15 and 20. Leviticus 15 is taken up with uncleanness caused by discharges, mostly menstrual or venereal. Likewise the bulk of legislation in Leviticus 20 (vss. 10–21) is taken up with sexual sins. The subject of menstruation is common to these two chapters. Leviticus 15 deals with the uncleanness of menstruation (vss. 19–30) while Leviticus 20 applies that situation to sexual intercourse (vs. 18).

Prior to and following these sexual laws in Leviticus 20 some general injunctions to observe the laws of the Lord appear (vss. 7–9, 22–26). The latter of these two passages concludes with a strong exhortation to make a distinction between the clean and the unclean, precisely the situation dealt with in Leviticus 11–15. Leviticus 14 contains a section about the unclean house (vss. 33–57), while the first part of Leviticus 20 deals with how the Israelites could make God's house unclean by their idolatry (Lev 20:3).

There appears, therefore, to be a reasonably direct correspondence between the subjects of these two sections even though they treat different aspects of similar subjects. The two bodies of legislation may be outlined as follows:

Personal Laws of Uncleanness

A chap. 11—food laws

B chap. 12—sexual laws: childbirth

C chaps. 13—14a—miscellaneous diseases

C chap. 14b—unclean houses of men

E chap. 15—sexual laws: discharges

Personal Moral and Ethical Laws

A' chap. 17—food laws

B' chap. 18—sexual laws: marriage

C' chap. 19—miscellaneous laws

D' chap. 20a—defiling God's house

E' chap. 20b—sexual laws: intercourse

The pattern in this grouping is not chiastic within the sections themselves. Instead, they follow each other like synonymous parallelism in the pattern of A:B:C:D:E: A':B':C':D':E'. However, these two blocks of material are located in chiastic positions, inasmuch as they occur on each side of the Day of Atonement legislation (Lev 16), the center of the book of Leviticus.

Blessings and Curses; Dedicatory Vows (Chapters 26-27)

The two final sections of Leviticus should be mentioned before we bring the information together in chart form.

"JUSTIFICATION"

chaps. 1–5, Sacrifice series

The first of these, the blessings and curses, are found in Leviticus 26. The material stands apart from the laws of Leviticus 17–25 just as the blessings and curses of the covenant comprise a separate section of Near Eastern covenant formulary. They serve here as a fitting summary to all that has gone on before in the book.

These blessings and curses were not only for those who observed, or did not observe, the laws of the preceding eight chapters. They were also for those who participated, or did not participate, in the offering of sacrifices described in the first half of Leviticus. This is a very covenant-like arrangement in which the preceding two halves of the book, now viewed as a whole (chaps. 1–25), stand in the same position as the stipulations of a covenant. The blessings and curses serve as a fitting conclusion to the entire body of legislation. Consequently they appropriately stand outside the chiastic literary structure of the book, beyond the second limb of the chiasm.

Something similar can be said about chapter 27, a concluding statement dealing with dedicatory vows. This is not just a random and idle appendix; it stands in this position for a specific purpose. Just as one would enter into covenant with Yahweh by taking a vow to be a faithful and loyal vassal to Him (cf. Exod 24:3-8), so this section on vows in general stands as a natural conclusion to the whole covenant relationship posited by the book of Leviticus. Since the response to the offered covenant relationship would be made in the form of a vow, it is fitting for this collection of dedicatory vows to appear at this point in the composition of Leviticus. Like the preceding chapter this body of instruction on vows stands outside the chiastic structure of the book.

The relationship of the various parts of Leviticus may be summarized now in chart form to indicate the book's chiastic structure. Note that chapter 16 (the Day of Atonement legislation) has been placed in the center at the top of the chart to denote its central position in the book. The left and right columns schematize the two limbs of the chiasm. The left column should be read from *bottom to top* (chaps. 1–15), but the right column should be read from *top to bottom* (chaps. 17–25). Note the six large groupings that are parallel to each other (three groupings in each column) and the inverted order of the smaller subsections (a, b, c, etc.) with their counterparts.

Chiastic Structure of Leviticus

"SANCTTFICATION"

Sanctuary support, chap. 24a

Festival series B, chap. 25

History: Case of blasphemy, chap. 24b

chapter 16 Day of Atonement **Personal Laws of Uncleanness Personal Moral Laws** Food laws, chap. 17 chap. 15, Sexual laws: Discharges a) chap. 14, Unclean houses of men Sexual laws: marriage, chap. 18 \mathbf{C}' chap. 13, Miscellaneous diseases Miscellaneous laws, chap. 19 (c chaps.17-20 chaps.11-15 chap. 12, Sexual laws: Births (b Defiling the house of God, chap. 20a chap. 11, Food laws Sexual laws: Intercourse, chap. 20b (a e) **Priestly History Priestly Legislation** (c chap. 10, Fall from office Priestly fitness, chap. 21 a) **B**′ (b chap. 9, End of inauguration Sacrificial fitness, chap. 22 chaps. 8-10 chaps. 21-22 (a chap. 8, Star of inauguration **Cultic Legislation Cultic Legislagion** chaps. 6-7, Sacrifice series Festival series A, chaps. 23

A'

chaps. 23-25

d)

Α

chaps. 1-7

(a

Justification/Sanctification

Our first theological observation has to do with the nature of the materials found in the two halves of Leviticus. In broad terms it may be said that the first half of the book covers the sacrificial system; the second outlines the way the people are to live. O. T. Allis has observed that Leviticus may be viewed as the most legalistic book in the OT inasmuch as it seems to govern by precept or principle the whole of life. Yet no OT book more clearly enunciates the redemption which is in Christ.⁹

The sacrificial system of the first half of Leviticus brings atoning sacrifices into view. In the NT the atoning death of Christ made certain and sure the truth of justification by faith. The sacrifices prescribed in Leviticus foreshadowed His vicarious death. Thus we may infer that this is the section of the book that deals with the subject of justification as it was mediated through the OT system. We have noted this point on the chart by placing the term "Justification" over the first limb of the chiasm.

In both the OT and NT God's people are called to holy living. As we have mentioned earlier, this particular emphasis has been given in the Holiness Code in the second half of Leviticus. The Hebrew and Greek words used to describe holy living may be summarized under the English term "sanctification." Consequently we have labeled the second limb of our chiasm with this word.

With justification given extensive treatment in the first half and sanctification given similar treatment in the second half, we see the book of Leviticus forming a harmonious whole in prescribing the total spiritual life for God's people in ancient time. Although some of the individual stipulations have been revised for this present era, the basic design for spiritual experience offered to the people of God in Leviticus is still valid in terms of its broad outlines. In a sense it is remarkable that a book that is 3,500 years old could be so up to date!

Day of Atonement: Structural and Thematic Center of Leviticus

Chiastic structures such as we have observed in the literary arrangement of Leviticus were used for a number of reasons in OT writings. One chief reason was that it enabled the writer to emphasize the element he positioned at the juncture or fulcrum of the chiasm.

In Leviticus that fulcrum is the legislative instructions dealing with the Day of Atonement. This is one way of saying by literary form that the subject of the Day of Atonement lies at the heart of the book of Leviticus. Consequently its importance as the thematic and structural center of the message of Leviticus should be stressed.

Earlier in our chapter it was stated that the Day of Atonement narrative appeared to be the culminating piece in the sacrificial legislation. Our later observations on the literary structure of the book now tend to confirm that opinion. Leviticus 16 is the thematic culmination and climax of the sacrificial system of the book. It is also the center and climax of its literary structure. These two factors fit together and lend a mutual emphasis to each other.

Literary Structure and Transfer of Sin to the Sanctuary

Recent studies have affirmed as a biblical concept that the sins of repentant Israelites (guilt and accountability) were transferred to the sanctuary when they offered the required sin offerings in faith.¹⁰ It would appear that such a transfer of accountability would contaminate the sanctuary. However, it has been observed that what might be termed "rightful" or "legal" contamination of the sanctuary is never explicitly stated to bring defilement to it.

While there are no explicit statements to this effect, there are three ways by which it may be inferred from our data in Leviticus that such was indeed the understanding of the Israelite community.

1. Leviticus 16:16 states that on the Day of Atonement the high priest "shall make atonement for the holy place [second apartment], because of the uncleannesses of the people of Israel, and because of their transgressions, all their sins; and so shall he do for the tent of meeting [holy place], which abides with them in the midst of their uncleannesses." The results from this cleansing of the sanctuary, including the altar of burnt offering (vs. 20), was a cleansed people—"for on this day shall atonement be made for you, to cleanse you; from all your sins you shall be clean before the Lord" (vs. 30).

If cleansing the sanctuary resulted in a cleansed people, it is evident that their confessed sins (pardoned through the daily private or public sin offering sacrifices) had been previously transferred to the sanctuary. Such an understanding would have recognized a legal contamination of the sanctuary as its ritual processes were carried out.

2. Another approach is to recognize that Eastern thought patterns and reasoning are not always the same as Western ways of thinking. Therefore recognition must be taken of the fact that we are dealing with a ritual system of sacrifice in a Near Eastern setting. What may be clear to Eastern thinking is not always readily apparent to the Western mind-set.

In the third essay Dr. Alberto Treiyer gives consideration to the paradox of the Hebrew sacrifice and the principle of substitutional interchange. In the Hebrew mind sacrificial blood had simultaneously both a defiling/cleansing function. Thus while the sacrificial blood cleansed the repentant sinner, it simultaneously contaminated the sacred precincts with his confessed sins which in a sense the sanctuary assumed.

3. A third approach relates to the literary and thematic structure of Leviticus which we have briefly surveyed.

It is stated in Leviticus 16:16 that the Day of Atonement ritual was intended to cleanse the sanctuary "because of the uncleannesses of the people of Israel," and "because of their transgressions." Transgression and uncleanness are the two major areas treated in the first fifteen chapters of Leviticus. Transgressions are dealt with in Leviticus 1–7, and uncleannesses are treated in Leviticus 11–15.

The position of the Day of Atonement ritual as the capstone to these sections dealing with sacrifices for these concerns indicates a close relationship with them. This close relationship implies that the Day of Atonement served to cleanse the sanctuary of those transgressions and uncleannesses that had been pardoned and transferred to it throughout the year by means of the rituals prescribed in Leviticus 1–15. Thus the Day of Atonement function clearly implies a "legal" contamination of the sanctuary by the sacrificial system outlined in the first half of Leviticus.

Daily and Yearly (Day of Atonement) Sin Offerings Compared (Lev 4, 16)

Since both sins and uncleannesses were treated in the daily service by individual or private sin offerings, it is only logical to consider the "final" sin offering of the cultic year (Day of Atonement) as culminating and encompassing these periodic and repetitive actions. The location of the Day of Atonement legislation in Leviticus emphasizes this final function.

In this connection we wish now to compare the Day of Atonement sin offering—the Lord's goat (Lev, 16:8, 15)—with the first two classes of sin offerings in Lev 4—priest, whole congregation (Lev 4:1–21). One possible reason why the closeness of this relationship has not been perceived more readily in previous studies is that the sacrificial animals used for the congregation were different. The animal chosen for Yahweh to cleanse the sanctuary was a goat (Lev 16:8); that employed in the parallel position for the whole congregation was a bullock (Lev 4:14–15). The purpose was the same, however, in both instances—to make atonement for the whole congregation (Lev 4:13, 20; cf. Lev 16:17).

A bullock was used for the high priest, representing thus the entire priesthood on the Day of Atonement (Lev 16:6, 33). Likewise a bullock was used for the priests in the regular sin offerings (Lev 4:3). Furthermore, bullocks sacrificed as regular sin offerings and bullocks and goats sacrificed as special sin offerings on the Day of Atonement were all designated by the same term—sin offerings. Day of Atonement offerings were not called "atonement" offerings! The fact that both sets of sacrifices were named sin offerings indicates their similarity.

The identification of these two sets of sacrificial animals in Leviticus 4 and 16 can be drawn even more sharply by observing the similarity in the priest's manipulation of the blood. For example, the blood of regular sin offerings (for a priest or the whole congregation) was taken into the sanctuary. Likewise the blood from the bullock and goat sacrificed on the Day of Atonement was taken inside the sanctuary. We may note four other correspondences by reviewing the two rituals:

- 1. Regular sin offering. The priest did four principal things with the blood drawn from bullocks sacrificed as sin offerings for a priest or the whole congregation (Lev 4:5–12, 17–20).
- A. He took some of the blood into the holy place of the sanctuary and sprinkled it seven times "before the Lord" in front of the veil that marked off the most holy place.
- B. He put some of the blood on the horns of the altar of incense in the holy place.
- C. He poured out the remainder of the blood at the base of the altar of burnt offering in the courtyard of the sanctuary.
- D. He had the carcass of the animal and its hide removed and burned outside the camp. None of the flesh was eaten by the priest.
- 2. Day of Atonement sin offering. A number of similarities (and a few significant differences) can be seen in the way the blood of the bullock selected for the priest and his order and the blood of the Lord's goat was manipulated on the Day of Atonement (Lev 16:11–19, 27–28).
 - A. The high priest took the blood of the bullock and then the blood of the goat into the most holy place. Each was sprinkled upon the mercy seat and before the mercy seat seven times.
- B. The high priest was to do the same for "the tent of meeting" (the holy place). This part of the ritual is not spelled out, but the context implies that the procedure was similar to what was done in the most holy place and in the court. Therefore, we may assume that he applied some of the blood of the bullock and goat to the horns of the altar of incense and sprinkled it seven times (cf. Exod 30:10).
 - C. The high priest then placed some of the blood from each of these sacrificial animals upon the horns of the altar of burnt offering and sprinkled it likewise seven times.
 - D. The carcasses of these two sacrifices together with their hides were removed without the camp and burned. None of the flesh of either animal was eaten by the high priest.

3. Further comparisons. From these descriptions further comparisons can be drawn. At the outset it should be noted that both sets of rites took place in a reverse direction. As his first step, the priest takes the blood into the sanctuary to the farthest point he will go to perform the rites: to the interior veil for the regular sin offering; into the most holy place for the Day of Atonement sin offerings. Then he begins to treat each successive area as he comes out from the innermost point. On the Day of Atonement the process represents a progressive cleansing of the sanctuary from the inside out as he works backwards with the sacrificial blood (second apartment, first apartment, court).

While the precise *location* for the ministration of the respective first phases differs (on each side of the inner veil), they are similar in nature. In both cases it may be said that the blood was sprinkled before the mercy seat seven times. Sprinkling the blood in front of the veil was equivalent to sprinkling it before the mercy seat. (It must be remembered that the entire sanctuary was the dwelling place of God. The veil was not an end in itself; it appears only to have provided protective covering for the priests when ministering in the first apartment.) There is no evidence that the high priest sprinkled blood before the veil on the Day of Atonement. The rite in the most holy place would have taken the place of this first phase of the regular sin offering. Because of this advancement in location, the blood of the sin offerings on the Day of Atonement was brought one step closer to the Lord, that is, to His law which had been broken.

According to the way the prepositions are used in Leviticus 16:14–15 the blood was sprinkled "over" ('al) the face of the mercy seat. The mercy seat formed the cover for the ark and was therefore located over the "testimony"—the tables of the law (Exod 25:21). The sense appears to be that in sprinkling the blood over the mercy seat, the priest was, in effect, sprinkling the blood upon the tables of the law. Had the mercy seat not been there, the blood would have been sprinkled directly upon the law.

Thus the atonement was directed toward and was ultimately for the broken law. This was the most direct approach and the closest that the blood could be brought into relationship with the law to make expiation for its violation. Although the Lord was veiled in the cloud over the mercy seat (Lev 16:2), the emphasis in the blood rite was not on making an atonement in His presence but on applying the atoning blood to the law—the expressed will of God—which the Israelites had violated by their transgressions. The blood was applied directly to that broken law on the Day of Atonement, and this day only.

Scarcity of detail prevents our making much of a comparison between the ministries of the second phase of the regular sin offering and the second phase of the Day of Atonement sin offerings. Since in the latter case the high priest was supposed to do the same thing with the blood in the holy place that he had done in the most holy, it may be presumed that the rite involved another sprinkling of the blood seven times. This would have been done over the altar of incense (cf. Exod 30:10). By comparison the horns of the same altar of incense were impressed with blood in the rites of the regular sin offering (Lev 4:7). Thus there was an identity of activity in the holy place between the regular sin offering and those offered on the Day of Atonement.

The third phase of these two sets of sin-offering rites differed considerably. In the regular sin offering leftover sacrificial blood was brought from the holy place and poured out at the base of the altar of burnt offering. That is to say, it was disposed of in a sacred place after some had been used for its intended purpose in the holy place of the sanctuary.

In contrast, the blood of the Day of Atonement sin offerings was first applied to the horns of that altar and then was sprinkled over it seven times. In other words there was a ministry of the blood at this altar rather than a mere disposal at its base. Thus the Day of Atonement sin offering blood rite not only cleansed the altar of burnt offering (Lev 16:19), but also prepared it for the ministration of another year's round of sacrifices.

The basic differences between these two sets of sin offerings is that the blood of the regular sin offering (for priest/entire congregation) was used exclusively in the holy place; the Day of Atonement sacrifice was ministered in both apartments and the outer altar. Also, the immediate objective differed. In the regular sin offering the priest or congregation is atoned for and cleansed directly. On the Day of Atonement the sanctuary is atoned for and cleansed; the people are cleansed indirectly.

Although the fourth phase in either set of blood rites is not particularly important, it should be noted that the removal of the carcasses and hides to a place outside the camp and their subsequent disposal by burning was similar.

In this review of these two sin offering rites several similarities have been identified. Each rite went through a four-phase procedure in essentially the same locations in the sanctuary. Both sets of sacrifices are designated sin offerings, and both are said to have made atonement. Some of the details in the manner the blood is administered are also similar.

These similarities stand in sharp contrast to the manner in which the other offerings in the sacrificial system were handled. Blood from the other kinds of sacrifices was not taken into the sanctuary and their particular elements were not handled in the same detailed manner as were the sin offerings.

The biblical writer's purpose in detailing these similarities seems to be that he wanted to underscore the correspondences between the regular sin offering for the priest and the whole congregation (Lev 4) and the sin offering for the priesthood and that presented by the whole congregation on the Day of Atonement (Lev 16). The order is even the same. The priest comes first in Leviticus 4, just as the high priest offered his bullock first on the Day of Atonement. The offering for the whole congregation came second in Leviticus 4, just as the goat presented by the whole congregation for the cleansing of the sanctuary came second in order on the Day of Atonement. The Day of Atonement sin offerings thus appear to be seen as an extension, identified with but advanced beyond the sin offerings presented during the year.

There is a sense, therefore, in which the sin offerings of the Day of Atonement came to stand for, to substitute for, to summarize all that had been accomplished thus far up to the time of that festival by the regular sin offerings—and even the other sacrifices too. Just as the offerings on the Day of Atonement were corporate (for all the truly penitent in the camp of Israel), so they were also corporate in standing for all the sin offerings that had gone before that time throughout the year. Their capstone position in the sacrificial limb of the literary chiasm of the book also suggests this.

The corporate nature of these sin offerings should be compared and emphasized. Four categories of sin offerings (not two) are listed in Leviticus 4. The first two involved the priest and the entire congregation; the latter two involved the individual (rulers/common persons). The manner in which the rites for the last two classes were conducted was also different. Thus the sin offering for the priest or for the whole congregation is emphasized by the parallels with the Day of Atonement was not the time for dealing with individual sin (although, on the practical side, forgiveness was available through the morning and evening sacrifice). In a sense that day of opportunity had come and gone during the cultic year. Now, on the Day of Atonement, it was time to deal with all the sins of the children of Israel as a corporate activity.

For good reason then, the sin offering (the Lord's goat) sacrificed on the Day of Atonement served for the entire congregation inasmuch as it appears to have been modeled after the regular sin offering made in behalf of the whole congregation (Lev 4). It was a corporate sacrifice for the sanctuary and the people. The same is also true of the sin offering made by the high priest on the Day of Atonement. It too was a corporate sacrifice made in behalf of the entire priest-hood (Lev 16:6, 11, 33).

The application of the blood of the Lord's goat on and before the mercy seat of the ark was obviously the high point of the services on the Day of Atonement. Leviticus 16:16 explains the significance of that act by the high priest. Here is my own literal translation of the Hebrew text:

"Thus [the high priest] shall make atonement for the sanctuary from the uncleannesses of the Israelites and from their transgressions for all their sin offerings."

This rendering differs from others in that it translates the last word in this passage (ḥaṭṭā'ôṭ) as "sin offerings" rather than "sins." Since the translation of this Hebrew word becomes quite important in understanding what occurred on the Day of Atonement, some attention should be given to its translation. What creates the problem here is the fact that the term in its singular (ḥaṭṭā'ôṭ) or plural (ḥaṭṭā'ôṭ) forms may be translated either as "sin(s)" or "sin offering(s)." That leaves the matter of determining the correct translation to considerations of syntax and context.

One way the meaning of this word can be examined is through a *direct* lexical approach. That is, we can see how it is used elsewhere in Leviticus 16. Thus, a simple survey of the chapter indicates that it is used ten times in the singular to refer to a sin offering (vss. 3, 5, 6, 9, 11, 15, 25, 27). In addition, the term occurs twice in the plural form where it indisputedly refers to sins (vss. 30, 34). So it could be argued from the weight of the majority of occurrences that the singular form in this passage denotes the sin offering, but the plural denotes sins.

Another way of looking at the meaning of this word is through an *indirect* lexical approach. That is, we could seek to determine its sense in this passage by determining the meaning of the verbs and nouns and other parts of speech contextually connected with it. The crucial verse for this kind of examination is Leviticus 16:16.

1. Related verb. This verse begins with the *verb* "to atone" (*kipper*), followed by the preposition "for" ('al) and the object of that atonement, "the sanctuary" (*haqqōdeš* means most holy place in this context). Grammatically speaking, the sanctuary (most holy place) is the direct object of the action, that is, the act of atoning (not the sins and uncleannesses of Israel). The preposition "for" ('al) is linked with this verb in a well-known formulation. It occurs also in Leviticus 16:18 and some two dozen times in Leviticus outside this chapter.

Another type of grammatical formulation in which the verb "to atone" (*kipper*) is used is with the preposition "for" (*baʿad*). This occurs four times in Leviticus 16 (vss. 6, 11, 17, 24). Examples of this construction occur outside Leviticus in Exodus 32:30; Ezekiel 45:7; 2 Chronicles 30:18–19.

A third type of formulation in which the verb "to atone" (*kipper*) is found is when it is followed by a direct object marker ('et) that identifies its grammatical direct object (for example, in Leviticus 16:20 the direct object marker is used in front of "holy place," "tent of meeting," and "altar," indicating three direct objects of the verbal action).

But none of these three kinds of construction occur in Leviticus 16:16 to link the verb "to atone" (kipper) with ḥaṭṭā'ôṭ ("sins/sin offerings") at the end of the verse. Whatever else this kind of statement may represent, it certainly is not a straightforward statement about atoning for sins. The linkage is more indirect.

2. Related nouns. From the verb in this passage we may move on to an investigation of its nouns. According to our passage the most holy place was atomed "from the uncleannesses of the children of Israel and from their transgressions" (literal rendering).

These two main nouns (uncleanness/transgression) provide a fitting summary of what has been discussed earlier in Leviticus 1–15. It will be remembered that transgressions were treated in chapters 1–7 and uncleannesses in chapters 11–15. Thus to translate haṭṭā'ôṭ which follows as "all their sins" would be redundant. It would seem that the word would thereby provide only another shade of meaning for the term "transgressions."

Further on in the chapter a shift is made in terminology (vs. 21). In verse 16 we have the sequence, uncleannesses—transgressions—sins/sin offerings. In verse 21 the sequence reads, iniquities—transgressions—sins/sin offerings. When the high priest lays his hands on the head of the live goat, he confesses over it "all the *iniquities* (' $aw\bar{o}n\hat{o}\underline{t}$) of the children of Israel, and all their *transgressions* ($p^e \bar{s}\bar{a}$ 'im)." The term "iniquities" replaces "uncleannesses," and the term for "transgressions" retains its second position in the sequence. The same word, $ha!\bar{t}\bar{a}$ ' $o\underline{t}$, follows both these nouns in the sequence. If it is translated "sins," it becomes even more redundant in verse 21 than in verse 16, unless it is designed to indicate "sin offerings."

The final statement of this nature occurs in the reference to the live goat bearing away "iniquity"—'awōnôt (vs. 22). None of the other terms are repeated. The term for "iniquities" is taken over from the lead word in the priest's confession over the head of the goat (vs. 21). The terminology and concept of "bearing iniquity" is well-known elsewhere in the OT.¹¹

Thus, if haṭṭā'ôṭ means "sins" instead of "sin offerings" in these passages (vss. 16, 21), then it is quite redundant. If on the other hand it means "sin offerings," then it carries much more significance and would be more than just another synonym for wrong doing. This apparent redundancy suggests (but does not prove) that this term may have been designed by the writer to serve a more contrasting purpose, namely, to indicate "sin offerings."

3. Related prepositions. The most important line of evidence pointing out the function and meaning of haṭṭā'ôṭ in verse 16 is the way the prepositions are linked with it and the other words in context. There are several passages that are pertinent to this study. They are listed in order and given in translation and partial transliteration with the suggested rendering of "sin offerings":

- 1. Lev 16:3 Aaron may enter the most holy place with a young bullock for (l^e) a sin offering (hatta't).
- 2. Lev 16:5 From the congregation of Israel he shall obtain two he-goats for (l^e) a sin offering (hatta't).
- 3. Lev 16:16 And he shall make atonement for (kipper 'al) the most holy place from (min) the uncleannesses (tume' ôt) of the children of Israel and from (min) their transgressions (piš'êhem) for (le) all (kol) their sin offerings (ḥaṭṭō'tam).
- 4. Lev 16:21 And he shall place his two hands over the head of the living goat and he shall confess upon it all the iniquities ('et-kol-'awōnôt) of the children of Israel, and all of their transgressions (we et-kol-piš'ehem) for (le) all their sin offerings (kol-ḥaṭṭo'tam).
- 5. Lev 16:30 On this day he shall make atonement to cleanse you from (min) all your sins (kōl ḥaṭṭō'ṯêkem).
- 6. Lev 16:34 To atone for the children of Israel from (min) all their sins (kol-ḥaṭṭō'ṭām).

In the first two statements (Nos. 1 and 2) we have examples where the preposition l^e is used with our word under discussion ($hatta^it$). In both instances the term clearly refers to "sin offering." This should then be compared with the preposition (l^e) that is used with the plural form of the same word at the end of verse 16 (No. 3) which we have rendered, "for all their sin offerings." Another similar use of l^e can be cited in verses 6 and 11. Aaron was instructed to sacrifice a bullock for a sin offering which was "for him" ($l\hat{o}$ equals l^e plus personal pronoun "him").

By way of contrast, the last two cases (Nos. 5 and 6) provide clear-cut instances where the plural of hatta't is used to indicate "sins." This is the only translation possible. But in both cases the preposition used is min ("from"), not l^e . This usage should be compared also with exhibit 3. In this passage (vs. 16) the first two indirect objects ("uncleanness" and "transgressions") are also preceded by the same preposition min in contrast with l^e which precedes the last word, hatta'ot, which we are discussing. Another case of a similar use of min can be cited from Leviticus 16. By applying the blood of the Lord's goat to the courtyard altar the priest was to cleanse and sanctify it "from" (min) the uncleannesses of the children of Israel (vs. 19).

Thus, the usage of these two prepositions (l^e and min) is not random in Leviticus 16. On the contrary it is clear and distinct. L^e is used with its common meanings of "to, for." And it is used with sin offerings. min is used with its common meaning of "from" and is used with "sins." This distinction gives a preliminary indication that our word would be translated best as "sin offerings" in Leviticus 16:16. This working hypothesis leads to a more detailed examination of the passage itself.

- 5. Related adjective. The adjective "all" (kōl) is another term situated in the context of our main passage. It is used with haṭṭā'ôṭ, but not with the terms "uncleannesses" and "transgressions" which precede it. The contrast here is between "the uncleannesses of the children of Israel" and "their transgressions" on the one hand and "all their ḥaṭṭā'ôṭ" on the other. If the meaning of the latter word is "sin offerings" rather than "sins," then that meaning could encompass very well all of that which has been treated from the former two categories through their sacrifices. In this case the term would not be simply another category for evil.

In summary we may say there are two meanings lexically possible for $ha! t\bar{t} \bar{a}' \hat{o} t$ in this verse—"sins" or "sin offerings." "Sins" would be very close in meaning to "transgressions" which precedes it in the verse. Only a shade of difference in meaning would separate them. If on the other hand the three distinctions noted do indeed separate this word from the preceding words both grammatically and in terms of its meaning, then we should look with more favor upon its alternate lexical meaning, "sin offerings." It is the writer's opinion that the translation of the word as "sin offerings" should be kept open as a possible option.

A similar relationship is borne out by the syntax of Leviticus 16:21 (see No. 4 in the list of six translations listed above). The three terms involved in this passage are, "iniquities," "transgressions," and ḥaṭṭā'ôṭ. Three distinctions may be noted here as well.

(1) There is a distinction made in terms of prepositions. Since "iniquities" and "transgressions" are the direct objects of the verb in this verse, they are not preceded by a preposition. However, haṭṭā'ôṭ retains the preposition le which sets it off from the other two terms. (2) "Iniquities" and "transgressions" are both preceded by the direct object sign ('eṭ). But no direct object sign precedes ḥaṭṭā'ôṭ. (3) "Iniquities" and "transgressions" are joined together with a conjunction ("and"). But ḥaṭṭā'ôṭ is not linked with them by another conjunction to make a triplet.

Given these syntactical separations between the two former words and the one latter word, we may expect again that the meaning of the latter should also be distinct in sense from the former. It is the meaning of "sin offerings" that supplies a more direct distinction.

Our conclusion from these considerations is that it is possible that our word could be translated as "sin offerings" in Leviticus 16:16, 21 rather than "sins." If that meaning for this word is established, the question naturally follows, What particular sense does such a meaning bring to these passages?

It was noted in our discussion that an identification may be seen between the regular sin offering and the sin offerings sacrificed on the Day of Atonement. The latter were intended to be identified with the former by way of serving as a substitute, a summary and corporate climax of treatment for the former. Given that kind of understanding about the relationship between the daily and the yearly sin offerings, interpreting haṭṭā'ôṭ in verses 16, 21 as "sin offerings" would make good sense.

The regular sin offerings—sacrificed throughout the year—atoned for the two main negative aspects of Israelite life: sin and uncleanness. Both of these kinds of offenses were atoned for by sin offerings. Our suggested translation of "sin offerings" for Leviticus 16:16, 21 would refer back to the regular or daily sin offerings made during the previous year. The blood of the annual sin offering (the Lord's goat) then came along and took up their work and record, as it were, and carried it through to completion.

The identification of the regular sin offerings and what they served for with the ultimate purpose of the final sin offering on the Day of Atonement are borne out strongly by the potential translation of haṭṭā'ôṭ in its context: "Thus [the high priest] shall make atonement for the sanctuary [most holy place] from the uncleannesses of the Israelites and from their transgressions for [on account of/on behalf of] all their sin offerings" (vs. 16).

The word for "transgressions" in this verse conveniently summarizes everything dealt with in Leviticus 1–7. The word for "uncleannesses" summarizes everything that is dealt with in Leviticus 11–15. And the word for "sin offerings" likewise would summarize all the offerings sacrificed for both of these major conditions dealt with in the first half of Leviticus (chaps. 1–15) and now crowned by the all-inclusive sin offering of the Lord's goat on the Day of Atonement (Leviton).

Such a translation strongly indicates that the Day of Atonement sin offering ritual functioned to cleanse the sanctuary from only the confessed sins of the penitent Israelites. That is, it functioned to remove the sins that had been confessed and transferred to it by means of the sin offerings that had been offered previously during the year.

These are some of the relationships that come to view with the translation of Leviticus 16:16 suggested here and its position as the capstone of the sin offering rituals and center of the literary structure of the book.

Personal Forgiveness and the Day of Atonement in Perspective

Another important comparison should be made between the daily and yearly sin offering rituals. It may be pointed up by asking, At what point in time did forgiveness and acceptance come to a repentant Israelite participating in the sanctuary system?

This question is answered emphatically in Leviticus 4–5. When such a person brought his sin offering to the sanctuary, confessing his sin, he was forgiven. Repeatedly the statement is made in these passages to this effect: "the priest shall make atonement for him, and he shall be forgiven" (see Leviticus 4:20, 26, 31, 35; 5:10, 13, 18).

In contrast, no such statement about forgiveness is ever given in the Day of Atonement legislation. Different forms of the verb for making atonement appear in Leviticus 16 more than a dozen times (ves. 6, 10–11, 16–18, 20, 24, 27, 20).

In contrast, no such statement about forgiveness is ever given in the Day of Atonement legislation. Different forms of the verb for making atonement appear in Leviticus 16 more than a dozen times (vss. 6, 10–11, 16–18, 20, 24, 27, 30, 33–34). However, never once do these passages indicate that forgiveness resulted for the congregation as a whole or for individuals.

The Day of Atonement had to do with forgiveness only in an indirect sense. It was a special ritual for the cleansing of the sanctuary. The individual Israelite was forgiven when he sacrificed his sin offering and confessed his sin. By the process of the blood rites his sin and accountability were transferred from him to the sanctuary where it remained until dealt with on a final basis on the Day of Atonement. The repentant believer in the divine grace was thus forgiven when he had taken care of his part of the process. The rest remained for God to accomplish in cooperation with the priests who managed the sacrificial system according to His instruction.

It is evident, therefore, that the Day of Atonement ritual by its capstone position in the sanctuary system (underscored by its literary center in Leviticus) was designed to focus attention of a penitent Israel beyond the state of personal forgiveness and acceptance to the final aspect of the divine plan to resolve the sin issue. That aspect, all symbolism aside, involves the phases of final judgment which culminates the plan of salvation and, banishing sin and its instigator, upholds God's honor and completes the redemption of His people.

Conclusion

It has been demonstrated by various commentators who have written on Leviticus that it is a well-organized book. This essay extends the analysis to suggest the idea that Leviticus was structured purposely along the lines of a grand chiasm in which the various elements of chapters 1–15, composing the first limb of the chiasm, are balanced with the elements of the second limb, chapters 17–25, in a reverse order. At the literary and thematic center of the book lies the legislation dealing with the Day of Atonement. Among other things such a literary arrangement argues for the unity of Leviticus and single authorship.

The first half of Leviticus is taken up essentially with the sacrificial system. Since it was the mediation of the blood that made atonement for sin and brought the sinner forgiveness and acceptance with God, we may refer to its basic theological core as oriented around the subject of justification.

The second half of Leviticus elaborates upon the commandments by which Israel was to live. The motivation for the observation of God's will was encapsulated in the Lord's oft repeated statement: "You shall be holy; for I the Lord your God am holy" (Lev 19:2). For this reason the second half of the book is sometimes referred to as the Holiness Code. This call to holiness was a call to sanctified living. In this manner the second half of Leviticus centers on the general topic of sanctification.

The focus of this essay has been largely on the Day of Atonement blood rites which come as the ritual capstone to the sin offerings discussed in a portion of the first limb of the chiasm. The importance of the Day of Atonement is underscored by its central position in the literary structure of Leviticus. Several significant comparisons can be made between the yearly sin offering (the Lord's goat) and the regular sin offerings sacrificed in behalf of the priests and the whole congregation during the year. This is especially true if "sin offerings" is accepted as a valid translation for haṭṭā'ôṭ in the key passages of Leviticus 16:16, 21.

If this translation is accepted, these verses would indicate more clearly than otherwise that atonement was made on this special day to remove from the sanctuary the uncleannesses and transgressions of the children of Israel transferred there through the sin offerings previously offered during the year. The Day of Atonement thereby dealt in a final manner with the two areas of behavior discussed in the first limb of the chiasm—transgressions (Lev 1–7), uncleannesses (Lev 11–15), both being atoned for by sin offerings.

Leviticus is a clear-cut case in which form complements function. Placed at the center of the book by careful and theological design, the Day of Atonement completed the symbolic sacrificial ritual of the sanctuary and foreshadowed the reality of God's completion of the plan of salvation by final judgment. Serving also as the literary fulcrum of the book, the Day of Atonement narrative provides an appropriate transition to the second half of Leviticus which tells how forgiven people should conduct their lives in responsible living before the Lord. Form complements function in an aesthetically appealing and theologically significant way in the message and the medium of the message in Leviticus.

CHAPTER VI

Transfer of Sin in Leviticus

Angel M. Rodriguez

Editorial synopsis. The position taken by the present author is that, in the Israelite system of worship, sin and guilt were transferred from the repentant sinner to the sanctuary through the sacrificial offerings, particularly the sin offerings.

There is general agreement among scholars that the concept of transfer is explicit in the scapegoat ritual (Lev 16:21). However, it is questioned whether a similar transfer took place in connection with sacrificial offerings.

In counter to this stance the author observes that the ritual of the laying on of hands occurred at the offering of every sacrificial animal. The evidence summarized by an analysis of three non-ritual incidents—the laying of hands on a condemned blasphemer by witnesses (Lev 24:14), by Moses on Joshua (Num 27:18–23), by Israel on the Levites (Num 8:10)—clearly indicates that the act signified *transfer* to the Hebrew mind. But what was transferred through the sacrificial offerings?

As a first step in finding the correct answer, the writer reviews those passages which explicitly state that the sanctuary was defiled by open neglect of the rituals for purification, by idol worship (without and within the temple), and by deliberate rebellion against the covenant relationship. The sanctuary was contaminated when such unclean and sinful persons hypocritically sought to worship the Lord in His temple. This kind of defilement of the sanctuary, however, was not removed through a cleansing ritual, but rather through the destruction of those who had contaminated it in this manner.

On the other hand it is evident that another class of sins and impurities committed by God's people did reach the sanctuary and were removed from the sacred precincts once a year by the Day of Atonement ritual. It is the thesis of this chapter that these were their confessed sins and impurities which had been transferred previously to the sanctuary by means of sacrificial offerings.

A strong proof for this position is the fact that the priests were required to eat a portion of the flesh of the sin offerings (for sins with which they were not involved personally). As a result the priests were said to "bear the iniquity of the congregation" (Lev 10:17) This indicates that sins and guilt were transferred to the sacrificial animal by the laying on of the hands of repentant sinners and were passed on, in turn, to the priests by their eating of the flesh. Sin was transferred by the blood rites as well.

Those who deny such a transfer of sin ask how it is possible for the sacrificial victim to be contaminated in this manner and yet be regarded as "most holy" (Lev 6:25, 29). The writer explains that the phenomenon of having an instrument of atonement bearing sin and being holy at the same time is a characteristic of Hebrew worship. The transference of sin did not in reality annul the holiness of the victim, the priest, or the sanctuary. This is possible only in the context of divine atonement. The Day of Atonement cleansing of the sanctuary demonstrated that holiness and sin/impurity are essentially incompatible.

Editor's Note: In the ritual type, the penitent's confessed sin and accountability were transferred to the sanctuary through the sacrificial victim and the priest. It may be said that for the time being the sanctuary assumed his guilt, and he was forgiven. On the Day of Atonement the sanctuary was cleansed, and thus God (in the sanctuary) was cleared. Figuratively, ultimate accountability was placed on the scapegoat which was led away to the wilderness.

In reality, when a sinner is drawn in penitence by the Holy Spirit to accept Christ as his Saviour and Lord, Christ assumes his sins and accountability, though He Himself is sinless (cf. 1 SM 392:2; Heb 7:26). The repentant sinner is forgiven freely. The perfect obedience of Christ is accounted to him, and he stands justified before God. His name is enrolled in the book of life and pardon is entered into his records. In the final judgment, the antitypical day of atonement, the genuine believer who is in union with Christ will be reaffirmed before Heaven (Rev 3:5) and ultimate accountability will be placed upon Satan, the originator and instigator of sin.

Chapter Outline

- I. Introduction
- II. Sin/Impurity and the Sanctuary
- III. Transfer of Sin/Impurity and the Expiatory Sacrifice
- IV. Transfer and Contamination
- V. Conclusion

Introduction

There is not a single scholar who would deny that the concept of the transfer of sin is present in the book of Leviticus. They agree that it is explicit in at least one passage, namely, Leviticus 16:21. Apart from this passage, however, there is great disagreement on whether the idea of the transference of sin/impurity is present in the Israelite cultus. A rather large number of scholars would deny it in the expiatory sacrifices.²

Sin/Impurity and the Sanctuary

Some scholars suggest that the sins of Israel—any sin—affected the sanctuary. This means that whenever an Israelite sinned, God's dwelling was immediately contaminated and in need of purification. Sin, somehow, reached the sanctuary. Luigi Moraldi has argued that there is such an intimate relation between the land, the sanctuary, and the people that whenever an Israelite sinned, the three were contaminated.³ Thus the atonement made for the temple and the altar also cleansed the people and the land.⁴

Moraldi does not explain the nature of the relation existing between the sanctuary, the people, and the land. He does not define satisfactorily the process, or the how, of the contamination of the sanctuary through the sin of the people.

Recently it has been suggested that impurity is conceived, within the Hebrew cultus, as dynamic. It is supposed that it possesses an aerial quality which makes it possible for it to reach the sanctuary and to contaminate it. Thus, it is the sanctuary that is purified through the daily expiatory sacrifices. The sinner brought his offering because it was his responsibility to cleanse the dwelling of the Lord.⁵

Support for this view, that every sin and impurity occurring in Israel automatically defiled the sanctuary, has been sought in a number of passages which speak about the sins of the Israelites contaminating the sanctuary. We will spend some time analyzing these passages, even though they are not all found in Leviticus. The issue is important to address.

Leviticus 15:31. This passage clearly states that the uncleanness (verb, ṭāmē') of the people contaminates the sanctuary. Yet we should be aware of the fact that the contamination of the sanctuary and the contamination of the individual are not simultaneous. This verse is addressed to the priests. They have the responsibility of keeping the people of Israel separated from their uncleanness. This they could do by performing the cleansing rituals, mentioned in the previous verses, for the people.

If these rituals were not performed, the Israelite was not to approach the sanctuary; otherwise he would contaminate the holy dwelling. The contamination of the sanctuary mentioned in this verse is the result of a person coming to the sanctuary in a state of impurity. It is important to observe that this sin is a rejection of the divine means of cleansing. Therefore, there is no forgiveness available to the sinner; he is to die.

This same concept is also present in Numbers 19:13: "Whoever touches a dead person, the body of any man who has died, and does not cleanse himself, defiles [tāmē'] the tabernacle of the Lord, and the person shall be cut off from Israel; because the water for impurity was not thrown upon him, he shall be unclean." (Also verse 20.) The sanctuary is not contaminated at the moment the individual touches the corpse, but only if he does not avail himself of the cleansing instrument. By remaining in a state of impurity he deprives himself of the privilege of coming to the sanctuary; if he comes he will contaminate it. The result will be his death.

Leviticus 20:2–3. This injunction forbids the Israelites to offer their children to Molech. The individual who would dare to participate in such an abomination was to be put to death "because he has given one of his children to Molech, and so $[l^ema'an]$ defiled my sanctuary." The sin consists of offering a child sacrifice; but it somehow results (here the preposition $l^ema'an$ expresses result) in the defilement of the sanctuary. The question is, How is the sanctuary defiled in this case?

In an attempt to answer this question we should take into consideration verses 2–5. The basic law, expressed in casuistic form, is found in 20:2—"Any man of the people of Israel, or of the strangers that sojourn in Israel, who gives any of his children to Molech shall be put to death; the people of the land shall stone him with stones."

The rest of the pericope deals with two possible situations which would require God Himself to punish the sinner. In the first one it is stated that God will set His face against the person who gives his children to Molech, and who thereby contaminates the sanctuary ($t\bar{a}m\bar{e}$, 20:3). The Lord "will cut him off from among his people." In the second possible situation we are informed that God Himself will cut off from His people the family who sacrifices their children to Molech but who are not stoned because of the indifference of the people (20:4, 5). Sacrificing to Molech is such a serious crime that if the people, knowing what the person did, fail to punish the sinner, the Lord will punish him.

It is only in the first case discussed above that the sacrifice to Molech is associated with the defilement of the sanctuary. We would suggest that this case has to do with a person who sacrifices his children to Molech and nobody knows it. He visits the Lord's sanctuary, contaminating it. Since only God knows what that person did, it is He who will punish the sinner.

In the basic law (20:2), as well as in the second case (failure to stone the sinner), nothing is said concerning the contamination of the sanctuary. The reason for this is quite clear. Since what the person did is well known, the Levites could forbid him to have access to the sanctuary. His sin, therefore, does not contaminate the sanctuary. He himself is defiled (†āmē'; Lev 18:21, 30), alienated from the Lord. If in that state of impurity he has access to the sanctuary, he would contaminate it.

Support for our interpretation is found in Ezekiel 23:38–39. There it is stated that God's people sacrificed their children to idols, and on the same day they visited the sanctuary thus defiling it (tāmē'). By worshiping idols and sacrificing their children to them the people became impure. In that state of impurity they went to the sanctuary and contaminated it. Because of this flagrant violation of the covenant, Ezekiel announced the destruction of the people (Ezek 23:46–49). The conclusion is clear: those who sacrificed their children to Molech contaminated the sanctuary when coming to it in a state of impurity. The sin of child sacrifice was aggravated by coming to the temple in their uncleanliness.⁹

It is also Ezekiel who states that the sanctuary was defiled ($t\bar{a}m\bar{e}$) by the abominations of the Israelites (5:11). These abominations are described in chapter 8 as consisting of the adoration of idols within the precincts of the temple in Jerusalem. This very same accusation was raised also by Jeremiah (7:30). As a result both prophets announced the destruction of the people (Jer 7:32–34; Ezek 5:11; 8:18). The chronicler is addressing this same issue when he, at the end of his book, accused Israel of contaminating the sanctuary by "following all the abominations of the nations" (2 Chr 36:14). It was precisely that which, according to the chronicler, raised the wrath of God against His people.

There is one more passage where the contamination $(t\bar{q}m\bar{e}')$ of the sanctuary is mentioned. The punishment inflicted by God upon Israel through the pagans is described as an act of contamination of the temple. In Ezekiel's vision (9:7) God commands those who are to destroy the city of Jerusalem to "begin at my sanctuary" (9:6). He orders them to "Defile $[t\bar{q}m\bar{e}']$ the house, and fill the courts with the slain." The sanctuary is then defiled by the blood of the slain bodies of God's people.

According to Psalm 79:1 that is what happened: "O God, the heathen have come into thy inheritance; they have defiled thy holy temple; they have laid Jerusalem in ruins." The heathen themselves did not contaminate the sanctuary. It was contaminated by the slain bodies of the people of Israel (79:2-3). The pagans could only profane ($\frac{h}{a}$ lal) the sanctuary by treating it as a common building (Ps 74:7).

The passages we have just discussed are very important for an appropriate understanding of the sin/impurity relation to the sanctuary and the concept of transference of sin. We can now draw several conclusions:

- 1. Not every sin of the Israelites is transferred to the sanctuary, thus contaminating it. The sanctuary is said to be contaminated only when an individual enters into it in a state of uncleanness, or when it is used to worship idols or false gods.
 - 2. The sanctuary is contaminated when the people in open rebellion break the covenant, reject God's Torah, and still want to enjoy God's blessing.
 - 3. It is the people of Israel who contaminate the sanctuary. This was to be expected because only they had access to it. Their acts and their blood contaminate it.
 - 4. Finally, the contamination of the sanctuary mentioned in these passages is not removed through a cleansing ritual but through the destruction of the one who contaminated it. 11

None of these passages discusses the issue of cleansing the sanctuary, yet all of them mention the fact that the individual or the nation will perish.

None of the passages under consideration should be used to support the concept of the sanctuary as a kind of magnet which attracts to it every sin/impurity of the Israelites. They address a particular type of sin.

Having said all that, it is, nevertheless, necessary to recognize that, according to Leviticus 16, sin/impurity did reach the sanctuary. Somehow sin was transferred to the sanctuary, making unavoidable an annual ritual of cleansing and atonement. Which sins were expiated during the Day of Atonement? Many answers have been given to this question.¹² Yet it seems to us that in an effort to answer that question we should listen to what the chapter itself is saying and see how it fits within the Israelite cultic system as a whole.

If our understanding of the sins which contaminated the sanctuary discussed above is right, the purification of the sanctuary mentioned in Leviticus 16 has nothing to do with those sins. In attempting to identify the sins expiated during the yôm hakkippurîm (the Day of Atonements), there are at least four facts that should be taken into consideration.

In the first place, there is a continuous emphasis throughout Leviticus 16 on all the sins of the people of Israel (16:16, 21, 30, 34). We are informed that the sanctuary is to be cleansed "because of the uncleannesses [tum'āh] of the people of Israel, and because of their transgressions [peša'], all their sins [haṭṭā't]" (vs. 16). In verse 21 another term for sin is added to the list—"iniquities" ('āwôn). The combination of these terms for sin is used in the OT to include all the other concepts of sin. This means that Leviticus 16 is not limiting the sins expiated in the Day of Atonement to any category of wrong. The usage of the term peša' is of particular significance. This term "carries with it a consistent sense of revolt or rebellion against an overlord; some of the offenses for which atonement was to be made would have been committed despite the known will of God." 14

Secondly, "all the sins" are the sins of the people of Israel. During the Day of Atonement the Lord deals only with the sins of His people. The sins of those who were "cut off" from Israel, or who perished because of their sins, are not taken care of during this solemn day by sacrificial blood.

Thirdly, it is the sanctuary and the altars which are purified during the Day of Atonement and not the people.¹⁵ The sanctuary is cleansed "because of" the sins and impurities of the people (16:16). According to Leviticus 16:30, 33 the people were benefited by the cleansing of God's dwelling. But notice that in this case the expression *kipper'al* ("to atone for") is to be understood in a relational sense.¹⁶ Through the cleansing of the sanctuary the cleansing of the Israelites is final before the Lord (16:30).¹⁷

Fourthly, the fact that the yôm hakkippurîm (the Day of Atonements) was to be celebrated only once a year suggests that the sins expiated on that occasion were those committed by the people throughout the previous year. In other words, all the sins of the people of God have somehow reached the sanctuary, and once a year they are to be removed from that place.

The question still remains: How were all the sins of the people of Israel transferred to the sanctuary? In order to answer this question, we should recall that the only sinner who had access to the sanctuary was the repentant sinner. He could approach God, seeking forgiveness and depending on His grace. But the penitent could not come alone to the sanctuary. He was to be accompanied by a sacrificial victim.

We would like to suggest that it is the sin of the repentant sinner, the confessed sin, which makes necessary the cleansing of the sanctuary once a year. It is these confessed sins to which Leviticus 16 refers by the expression, "all their sins." These sins were transferred there through the expiatory sacrifices. An analysis of the ritual of the laying on of hands, the eating of the flesh of the sacrificial victim, and the blood manipulation, will support our suggestion.

Transfer of Sin/Impurity and the Expiatory Sacrifices

Laying on of hands

The ritual of the laying on of hands was practiced on every sacrificial animal.¹⁹ It is connected clearly with the idea of the transference of sin in a sanctuary setting in only one passage, namely, Leviticus 16:21. There it is stated that sin and impurity were transferred to the scapegoat through the laying on of hands. In this case, the meaning of the ritual is clear: the transference of sin. This understanding of the laying on of hands has been taken as being valid also in the cases of the daily sacrifices.²⁰

Nevertheless, a large group of scholars will argue to the contrary. They do not consider the scapegoat to be a sacrificial victim, especially since it is not slaughtered but is only removed alive from the sanctuary. This group of scholars recognize that sin was transferred to the animal. It is precisely this fact, they argue, which differentiates the scapegoat from the sacrificial victims. The scapegoat cannot be sacrificed because it has been contaminated by the sin/impurity of the people; on the other hand, the sacrificial victim is considered holy, most holy, after the laying on of hands.

Once the interpretation of the laying on of hands found in Leviticus 16:21 is rejected as valid also for the sacrificial victims, the exegete is left free to look for any interpretation of the ritual he may consider appropriate. That is probably why there has been a proliferation of theories on the meaning of the laying on of hands.

Thus, for instance, there is the *identification theory*, which states that in the ritual a strong and deep relationship is created²² between the offerer and the victim. Then there is the *consecration/dedication theory*, which affirms that through the laying on of hands the victim is set apart for a sacred purpose.²³ The *appropriation and/or designation theory*, emphasizes the idea that the victim belongs to the worshiper who is designating it as a gift to the Lord.²⁴ The *manumissio theory* interprets the ritual as indicating that the individual is renouncing his right of property.²⁵ Within these different theories one finds many variations.

Apart from Leviticus 16:21, there is not a single passage which would explain clearly the meaning of the laying on of hands when performed on sacrificial victims. But the ritual was practiced also on some non-cultic occasions. Thus it is appropriate to examine briefly those cases. Once we do that, we will discover that the concept of transfer is common to all the non-cultic cases.

The laying on of hands is mentioned in connection with three non-cultic incidents. First we note the rite in connection with a person who blasphemed the name of the Lord (Lev 24:14). Those who heard him were to lay their hands upon the blasphemer before stoning him. It cannot be denied that the ritual is here a means through which the witnesses identify the guilty one.²⁶

But it also had another purpose. According to Leviticus 5:1, the person who witnessed a sinful act became involved to the extent that he could lose his own life. Thus in this incident the ritual of the laying on of hands served the purpose of transferring to the blasphemer the guilt which would have been attached to the hearers had they concealed the sinful act.²⁷

The second non-cultic incident in which the laying on of hands was performed is found in the narrative of Joshua's installation as Israel's new leader (Num 27:18–23). According to the biblical text, Moses transferred to him some of his authority and honor through the laying on of hands (cf. Deut 3:9).²⁸

The last passage is Numbers 8:10. It discusses the consecration of the Levites. They, instead of the firstborn of the Israelites, were chosen by God to serve Him in the sanctuary. The people laid their hands upon the Levites, transferring to them the responsibility (which formerly belonged to the firstborn of the people) of serving at the sanctuary.²⁹

Thus it is evident that in the non-cultic passages the ritual of the laying on of hands is used to express the idea of transfer. In one important cultic case the same ritual is performed on a cultic animal to transfer something to it. It is quite understandable then why a group of scholars believes that the laying on of hands upon a sacrificial victim also expressed the idea of transference.

Of course, they are not all agreed on what is being transferred. Some would argue that through the ritual "man transmits his own characteristics, his personality to an animal." Others would suggest that what is transferred to the victim is the sin and guilt of the offerer. On the offerer of the offerer of

It seems to us that the interpretation which best fits the facts is that one which takes the laying on of hands as indicating the transfer of sin and guilt to the sacrificial victim. However, this creates a serious problem: the problem of explaining the sanctity of the victim after the laying on of hands.

In spite of this problem, to which we will return, the transferring of sin to the sacrificial victim is indicated not only by the incident of the scapegoat and the non-cultic cases already discussed, but also by the fact that the one who performed the ritual was a sinner seeking forgiveness and cleansing. Furthermore, the ritual eating of the flesh of the sin offering by the priest supports our view of the laying on of hands.

Ritual of the Eating of Flesh

According to the Levitical legislation, a portion of the flesh of the sin offering belonged to the priest. He was to eat it in a holy place. The flesh was considered to be most holy and could be eaten only by the priests (Lev 6:17–19, 25–26, 29; 7:6–7).

It has been argued that this ritual served the purpose of providing food for the priest.³² This is rather obvious. Yet the ritual seems to have a more significant function. The very fact that he should not take it home to share the food with his family indicates that we are dealing here with a very significant cultic act. It may not be wrong to say that "the eating is apparently part of the expiatory process."³³

The meaning of this ritual is stated clearly in Leviticus 10:17. Moses asks Aaron, "Why have you not eaten the sin offering in the place of the sanctuary, since it is a thing most holy and has been given to you that you may bear the iniquity of the congregation, to make atonement for them before the Lord?"

It has been suggested that this verse is describing the function of the sin offering and the role of the priest with respect to it.³⁴ The expression "to bear the iniquity" is considered to be an interpretation of the phrase "to make atonement," and is then translated, "to take away the guilt." This interpretation of the text is reflected in the *Jerusalem Bible*: "Why,' he asked, 'did you not eat this victim in the holy place? For it is a most holy thing given to you to take away the fault of the community, by performing the rite of atonement over it before Yahweh.'"

This understanding of the verse overlooks the fact that the passage is not talking about the sin offering per se but about the portion of the sacrifice that goes to the priest. In Leviticus, whenever the expression, "it was given to you" (or a similar phrasing: "I have given it to you/to Aaron"), has the sacrifice/offering as a direct object and the priest as an indirect object, the "it" always refers to the portion of the offering assigned to the priest (Lev. 5:16; 6:26, 29; 7:34, 36; 10:14). In Leviticus 10:17 the expression is referring to the same thing.

Furthermore, the question raised in the verse is not, What is the function of the sin offering? but rather, Why did you not eat the flesh of the sin offering? Moses not only raised the question, but also explained the significance of the ritual. By eating the flesh of the sacrificial victim, Aaron bears the sins of the people. This is to be done for the purpose of making atonement for them. In the process of atonement, therefore, it is very important for the priest to eat his portion of the sacrifices.

The expression, "to bear iniquity" ($n\bar{a}$ ś \bar{a} 'aw \hat{o} n), is a very important one within as well as outside the cultus. It has been studied carefully by W. Zimmerli.³⁵ He, correctly, suggests that in non-cultic passages God is always the subject of the verb, and it means "to take away sin—to forgive." But when the expression is used in *cultic contexts*, he argues that it has three possible meanings: (1) It can mean to bear the sin of another person vicariously (Exod 28:38; Lev 16:22; 10:17; Num 14:34; Ezek 4:4–6); (2) It can mean, "to assume responsibility" (Num 18:1); (3) Or it may be used as a priestly verdict to indicate that an individual is guilty of his sin and will be punished by God.

Two of the above usages of the phrase ("to bear iniquity") have been rejected by some scholars. The suggested meaning, "to assume responsibility/to be responsible," has been questioned by R. N. Whybray,³⁶ and rightly rejected by Rolf Knierim.³⁷ According to Knierim, such a translation makes iniquity ('āwôn) a neutral term, and that is never the case. He suggests that the phrase should be translated, "to be responsible for the 'āwôn/to have to bear 'āwôn."³⁸

Whybray has reacted strongly against the idea that "to bear iniquity" means to bear the sin vicariously for someone. He discusses the case of the scapegoat (Lev 16:22) and concludes that the idea of vicarious guilt is not present. He, rightly, indicates that the phrase there means "to carry away."³⁹ Neither is the idea of vicariousness present in Ezekiel 4:4–6. Ezekiel is bearing symbolically the punishment of the people in order to assure them that they certainly will bear their own sins.⁴⁰ In Numbers 14:34 the people are also receiving their deserved punishment because of their own sins.⁴¹

Concerning Exodus 28:38, it has been argued that the verb "to bear" (nāśā') in this instance means "to carry." The verb nāśā' is used several times throughout Exodus 28 with that meaning.⁴² For instance, Aaron is to "bear/carry" the names of the tribes before the Lord when he goes into the holy place (28:12, 29).

In 28:38 we read, "It [the plate of gold] shall be upon Aaron's forehead, and Aaron shall take upon himself any guilt [nāśā' 'āwôn] incurred in the holy offering which the people of Israel hallow as their holy gifts; it shall always be upon his forehead, that they may be accepted before the Lord." If we look carefully at this verse, it becomes clear that nāśā' here does not mean "to carry." The verb has that meaning when it is followed by an indirect object indicating destination (to carry something, somewhere). In verse 38 that is not the case.⁴³ We are only informed that the priest "shall bear the iniquity of the holy things."

We should not overlook the important fact that in verse 38 we are not dealing only with the verb $n\bar{a}\dot{s}\bar{a}$, but with a technical expression, namely, $n\bar{a}\dot{s}\bar{a}$ " $\bar{a}w\hat{o}n$ ("to bear iniquity"). This phrase is used practically always in Leviticus in the sense of "to bear sin and become responsible for it" (Lev 5:1, 17; 7:18; 10:17; 17:16; 19:8; 20:17, 19; 22:16). In Leviticus it has a negative meaning. To bear sin, to be responsible for it, means to be liable to punishment (7:18, 20, 21; 19:8). The only exception to the usage is found in Leviticus 16:22. There the expression "to bear iniquity" ($n\bar{a}\dot{s}\bar{a}$ " $\bar{a}w\hat{o}n$) is followed by an indirect object which states where sin is taken. But whenever $n\bar{a}\dot{s}\bar{a}$ " $\bar{a}w\hat{o}n$ is used in the absolute sense, it really means to be responsible for sin and liable to punishment.⁴⁴

It should be observed that Exodus 28:38 is talking about the sins of the "holy things ($q^0 dos \hat{i}m$)" which the people consecrated to the Lord. It is sometimes suggested that these sins are the sins committed in connection with the offerings, that is, inadvertent errors in the performance of the ritual. 45 Yet this is not even implied by the context.

The expression, "sins of the holy things," is better explained by bringing together the ideas expressed by Leviticus 10:17 and Exodus 28:38. What is of particular interest in these two passages is the fact that both deal with priests and sacrifices. According to Leviticus 10:17, sin is transferred to the priest by the ritual of the eating of the flesh of the sacrifice. Exodus 28:38, on the other hand, explicitly states that one of the functions of the priests was to bear the sins of the offerings and sacrifices of the people. Both passages are saying exactly the same thing. The sin of the people was transferred to the sacrificial victim and from it to the priest.

When an Israelite came to the sanctuary to offer an expiatory sacrifice, he was in a state of sin and guilt. He had sinned and, according to Leviticus 5:1, he was bearing his own sin $(n\bar{a}5\bar{a}^*\bar{a}w\delta n)^{47}$. He was responsible for his own sin and therefore liable to divine punishment. The only thing that could free the sinner from that state was a sacrifice. Therefore, the individual brought his own sacrificial victim. The priest made atonement for him (5:6), and he was forgiven by the Lord (5:10). He was no longer bearing his own sin. It was transferred to the sacrificial victim and to the person of the priest.

It appears to us that the ritual of the eating of the flesh clearly indicates that there is a transfer of sin in the Hebrew sacrificial system. Sin was transferred to the sacrificial victim. How was it transferred? There is only one answer to that question. Through the laying on of hands the sin of the offerer was transferred to the victim. By eating a portion of the flesh of the animal the priest bore it also.

The fact that during the Day of Atonement the sanctuary was cleansed from all the sins of the people of Israel suggests that the sin of the people was transferred, in the person of the priest, to the sanctuary.⁴⁸ The priest could not bear his own sin, or a sin in which he was somehow involved (Lev 4:1-21). Had he borne his own sin, he would have died (Lev 22:9). For this reason the priest could not eat of the flesh of his own sacrifice. It is at this point (within the sacrificial system) that the blood manipulation plays a very important role.

Blood Manipulation

It cannot be denied that the blood manipulation of the sacrifices is an extremely important aspect of the expiatory process. Sacrificial blood was to be sprinkled, thrown against the altar, put on the horns of the altar, and poured at the base of the altar.

The meaning of the sprinkling is stated clearly in Leviticus 16:14–15, 30. There we are informed that the sprinkling results in cleansing. The objects which are sprinkled receive the cleansing effect. There are scholars who would argue that the sprinkling always cleanses that upon which the blood is sprinkled.⁴⁹ It is then argued that when some of the blood of the sin offering is sprinkled before the veil, the holy place is being cleansed from the sin of the offerer.⁵⁰

It cannot be denied that the sprinkling of blood results in cleansing. The question is whether in the case of the daily sacrifices the effect of the cleansing is received by the sanctuary or the offerer. In looking for an answer, we should notice that it is *only* in the case of the Day of Atonement that the sprinkling results in cleansing for the sanctuary and the altar. In the second place, it is the context in Leviticus 16 which informs us that the ritual of the sprinkling cleanses that which receives the sprinkling. In the third place, the ritual itself, as well as the places where it is performed, differs significantly from the daily sacrifices.⁵¹

Turning to Leviticus 4 we find that it is not the sanctuary which is in need of purification in the daily rituals, but the individual. The priest, or the whole congregation, has sinned, and the sacrifice is performed for them. We suggest that in these cases the sprinkling cleanses not the object receiving it but the person who brings the sacrifice.

We know that in non-sacrificial contexts the benefit of the sprinkling could be received by other than the sprinkled object. Thus, for instance, the oil brought by the leper is consecrated by sprinkling some of it toward the sanctuary. In the case of the red heifer, some of its blood is sprinkled toward the sanctuary, consecrating not only the blood but the whole animal. In none of these cases does the sanctuary receive the benefit of the sprinkling.

We should remember that the sprinkling of sacrificial blood was limited to the blood of the sacrifices offered for the sin of the priest or of the congregation (Lev 4:1-21). In both cases the priest was involved in the sinful act. He was not to eat of the flesh of the victim; that is, sin could not be transferred vicariously to him. In that case sin was transferred to the sanctuary through some other means. This was done through the sprinkling of blood before the veil of the holy place. By coming into contact with the offerer through the laying on of hands, sin was transferred to the sacrificial victim. Through the blood sprinkling, it was further transferred to the sanctuary.⁵⁴

As we have indicated already, the cultic function of the blood is not just limited to the sprinkling. Blood was also to be put on the horns of the altar, or, in the case of the burnt and peace offerings, to be thrown against the altar. In all this process the final result is atonement for the persons involved.

The key role of blood in the expiatory process was assigned to it by God Himself. Any magical interpretation of blood used to validate its expiatory value is to be ruled out from the start. Leviticus 17:11 clearly indicates that God assigned to blood its expiatory significance. Blood has no inherent power or virtue.⁵⁷ Leviticus 17:11 establishes an interesting connection between blood and life. It equates them.⁵⁸ It is this identification of the two which explains why blood is so important in the expiatory process.

Life, according to biblical understanding, is a gift from God. Life belongs to Him who is its source.⁵⁹ Human life, therefore, should not be destroyed by man (Gen 9:5). Animal life also belongs to Him. Blood was considered to be the tangible manifestation of life in Hebrew thinking.⁶⁰

Since blood is life, it belongs to God. It is to be returned to Him. According to Leviticus 17, this can be done in two forms. In the case of game, the blood was to be poured out and covered with dust (17:13). In the case of sacrificial animals, the blood was to be brought to the altar. Through the altar, life (as blood) was returned to God (17:11).

The fact that the blood-life was returned to God via the altar gives to this blood a ritual or cultic function. When blood was taken to the altar, it was not being returned simply to God. The act of returning it to God is now part of the expiatory process and comes to express at least two main ideas: (1) This sacrificial blood-life is accepted by God as the blood-life of the sinner, the person. According to Leviticus 17:11, the lifeblood of the sacrificial victim is accepted by Yahweh "in exchange for the person." (2) By accepting the blood-life of the victim, God also is taking care of the sin of the person. Through the blood manipulation sin is transferred to the presence of God.

Transfer and Contamination

By emphasizing the concept of the transfer of sin, we expose ourselves to what is probably the most serious criticism raised against our suggestion. It is argued that a transference of sin would contaminate the sacrificial animal; yet the Bible refers to the victim as being "most holy" (Lev 6:25, 29–30). As indicated above, some scholars argue that in the case of the scapegoat we have transference of sin and contamination. These reasons, it is suggested, are why the scapegoat cannot function as a sacrifice. A similar view is taken in regard to the sin offering for the priest. It is said that since sin was transferred to it, its flesh was contaminated and it was necessary to burn the flesh.⁶²

We have already argued that the sin offering for the priest was burned because his sin was transferred to the sanctuary through the blood manipulation. The flesh of the victim was not necessary. On the other hand, the scapegoat was not sacrificed as it was not considered an offering. Elimination rites, were known in the ancient Near East religions. 63

Nevertheless, the force of the argument remains that a transference of sin would have contaminated the victim and the sanctuary. Scholars who accept the concept of a transference of sin have suggested different solutions to this problem. Here are some of them:

1. What was transferred to the sacrificial victim was the penalty, not the sin. It is argued that the victim was a substitute for the sinner; hence, while it received the judgment of God upon the offerer's sin, 64 it remained pure or clean itself.

It seems to us, however, that this kind of argumentation overlooks the fact that in the OT the nexus between sin and punishment is so intimate that in order for the victim to receive the penalty for sin, sin must have been transferred to it. The two cannot be separated.

- 2. "Holy" means belonging to God. This suggestion understands the expression "most holy," when applied to the sacrifice, to mean that in spite of the fact that sin has been transferred to it, it was still God's property. Find the suggestion really does not solve any problem at all. We still have the question, How was it possible for a contaminated/impure animal to belong to God?
- 3. The blood and fat of the sacrificial animal were immune to the defilement of sin. They were the only parts of the sacrifice offered to God. What made them immune was the fact that in them resided the life-force which opposed any contaminating agent.⁶⁶

This suggestion is based on a misunderstanding of blood as life. We have indicated already that blood has no power in itself. The power resides in God, not in the blood. Apart from this it should be remembered that the flesh of the victim, and even the victim as a whole, was considered most holy.⁶⁷

4. Contact with the altar purified the victim from the sin transferred to it. It is implied that the sacrificial victim became most holy when brought to the sanctuary. The sins loaded upon it were eliminated when the animal came into contact with the altar.⁶⁸

The biblical bases for this suggestion are still lacking. The altar itself was in need of purification every year.

5. The death of the victim neutralized the infection of sin. In this way the victim remaind most holy and the fat and blood could be taken to the altar. 69

Here again we are dealing with an honest guess. We know that even after the death of the victim, the sin transferred to the flesh through the laying on of hands was still present in it and could be transferred to the priest. The flesh of the dead animal still seems to be "contaminated."

6. The holiness of the priest, acquired through his annointing, was of such a nature that it could absorb the uncleanness of the offering.⁷⁰

It is rather difficult to understand what is meant by "holiness absorbing uncleanness." Does this mean that uncleanness is able to change its nature and become holiness? What really happens to the sin/impurity transferred to the priest? This theory provides no answer for these questions. By describing holiness as absorbing uncleanness, it certainly creates more problems than it proposes to solve.

This brief survey of proposed solutions to the problem of the transference of sin to the sacrificial victim indicates, at least, that we are dealing with a difficult problem. In looking for a satisfactory solution, there are a number of things we should keep in mind.

In the first place, we ought to recognize that nowhere in Leviticus are we told that the transference of sin which we found in connection with the daily sacrifices contaminated (†āmē') the victim, the priest, or the sanctuary. In those cases the term †āmē' ("to contaminate") was avoided. Its usage was limited, as we have seen already, to sins which required the death of the sinner because of his contamination of the sanctuary.

Tāmē' is, therefore, a very negative term. To use it in relation to the daily sacrifices would have suggested the opposite of what those sacrifices were expected to achieve. Instead of restoring the broken harmony between God and His people, the sacrifices, by contaminating the sanctuary in the sense of tāmē', would have separated the sinner once and for all from Yahweh.

Secondly, we should keep in mind that even though the term tāmē' is not used to interpret the transference of sin, the ritual of the Day of Atonement indicates that through the daily sacrifices the sanctuary was indeed "contaminated." During that day the sanctuary was to be cleansed (tāhēr), and atonement (kipper) was to be made for it because of the sins and impurities of the people of Israel (Lev 16:16).

The fact that the sanctuary was cleansed shows that sin and impurity were in it. This was the "contamination" which resulted from God's forgiveness. It had the purpose of preserving the repentant sinner alive. In forgiving him, God allowed sin to come to His very presence. Sin and impurity came under His controlling power.

Thirdly, we must recognize that sin was transferred to the sacrifice and to the priests, yet they remained holy. Their holiness was not destroyed. The phenomenon of having an instrument of atonement bearing sin and being holy at the same time is more common in the Hebrew cultus than one might think.

Thus, for instance, the person who took the flesh of the sin offering outside the camp to burn it was to wash his clothes and bathe his body before coming back to the camp (Lev 4:12). Yet its flesh was described unambiguously as "most holy" (6:24). This "most holy" sacrifice was a source of contamination requiring a ritual washing by the individual who burned it.

Another interesting example is found in the case of the red heifer (Num 19:9–21). The heifer was burned and its ashes mixed in water were to be used to remove sin (19:9). Yet we read that the person "who gathers the ashes of the heifer shall wash his clothes, and be unclean until evening" (19:10). The ashes were mixed with water and sprinkled on the person, who touched a dead body, to cleanse him (19:17–19). It is a surprising thing to find that the ashes of the heifer had both contaminating and cleansing qualities. The unclean person who was sprinkled by this ash-water mixture was cleansed (19:17–19), but the clean person who administered the sprinkling was thereby contaminated (19:21). In this rite cleanness and uncleanness were together. Something similar is found in relation to blood in the cultus. In some respects it was a source of impurity (Lev 12:7); in others, it was a means of purification.

Taking into consideration the evidence presented above, we should conclude that the transference of sin does not destroy the holiness of the sacrificial victim or the priest. We are confronted here with an unexplainable phenomenon. Sin/impurity and holiness are brought together and both remain what they essentially are.

This is possible only in the context of divine atonement. In the process of atonement, holiness and sin, life and death, purity and uncleanness are brought together in an unfathomable, paradoxical relation. Yahweh, the Holy One, is able to bring together both purity and impurity for the benefit of His people. The holy instrument could be touched by sin/impurity and yet remain holy.

During the Day of Atonement impurity is removed from the presence of God, from His sanctuary. It then becomes clear that holiness and impurity have nothing in common; that impurity is something foreign to Yahweh's nature; and that the Lord Himself is now returning it to Azazel, its ultimate source. What we have here is a cultic theodicy—a ritual justifying of God. In spite of the fact that Yahweh forgives the sin of His people, He remains Holy and can, therefore, challenge Israel to be holy also (Lev 19:2).

Conclusion

The book of Leviticus indicates that the transfer of sin/impurity was practiced within the Hebrew cultus.

This "legal" transfer of sin should not be confused with the "illegal" contamination of the sanctuary when an Israelite came to the sanctuary in a state of impurity. In those cases the sinner was to die. There was no expiation available to him because his intention was to avail himself of the benefits of the cultus while at the same time violating the covenant.

The biblical evidence, however, indicates that the confessed sins of the Israelites contaminated the sanctuary. We have argued that such a contamination was the result of the transfer of sin from the sinner, via the sacrifices, to the sanctuary. The only sin transferred to the sanctuary was the sin of the one who humbled himself before the Lord, asked forgiveness, and brought a sacrifice.

This transference of sin did not contaminate the sacrificial victim. In the expiatory process God was willing and able to bring sin/impurity to the very presence of a holy object without affecting its holiness. Impurity was finally transferred to the sanctuary. It contaminated the sanctuary in the sense that it was in the sanctuary.

The practice of transferring sin to God's dwelling means that Yahweh was willing to forgive the confessed sins of His people in order to continue dwelling among them. The Day of Atonement made the cleansing, effected through the daily transfer of sin, final. It also indicated that holiness and sin/impurity are essentially incompatible. Their sources are infinitely apart.

CHAPTER VII

The Day of Atonement as Related to the Contamination and Purification of the Sanctuary

Alberto R. Treiyer

CONTAMINATION OF THE SANCTUARY

Editorial synopsis. The purification rites performed on the Day of Atonement presuppose a previous contamination of the sanctuary by the sins of Israel.

The author suggests that sins may be classified in two categories: pardonable and unpardonable. By the term "unpardonable," he designates the hardened cases of rebellion in which the sinner openly transgressed in defiance of God and sought no pardon. Such sins as murder and idolatry are mentioned explicitly in the OT as defiling both the land and the sanctuary and profaning God's name (Lev 20:3; Num 35:33-34; Ps 106:37-38).

The author demonstrates from the biblical data that the only solution specified in the Israelite system for this kind of "illegal" contamination of the sanctuary was the death sentence of the guilty person. Sacrifices were never offered for sins that could not be pardoned. In the event of national apostasy this form of contamination could lead to a total abandonment of the temple service, and consequently it brought the judgment of God upon the nation. Thus the temple, initially contaminated by Israel's idolatrous rebellion, would be profaned further by its destruction under alien armies.

But the Day of Atonement never functioned to cleanse the temple in order to reestablish the worship thus terminated. Only inaugural rites were needed. Nor did the blood rites of the Day of Atonement cleanse the impenitent who refused the methods open to him to obtain forgiveness of sin or purification from ritual uncleanness (Num 15:30–31; Lev 15:31). The rites of the sanctuary on that special day did not benefit them. Their execution carried its own purifying significance (Num 35:33; Deut 17:7).

But there were on the other hand "pardonable" sins. The daily rituals transferred the confessed sins and impurities of penitent Israelites to the sanctuary throughout the year. The Day of Atonement ritual functioned on a yearly basis to remove this contaminating deposit.

Section Outline

- I. Introduction
- II. Contamination of the Sanctuary and Suppression of Worship
- III. Contamination of the Sanctuary and the Death Sentence
- IV. Contamination of the Sanctuary and the Day of Atonement

Introduction

On the Day of Atonement two outstanding events occurred: (1) the purification of the sanctuary, priesthood, and people (Lev 16:16–19, 30, 33–34), and (2) the expulsion of the scapegoat with the sins of Israel (Lev 16:10, 20–22). Related to these transactions was the death of the rebels who did not participate in the required spirit of contrition (Lev 23:27–31). A correct understanding of these important acts is necessary for a positive understanding of their theological implications in the OT as well as in the NT.

It is self-evident that the purification rites ordained for the Day of Atonement presupposed a previous contamination of the sanctuary. On that day the impurities/uncleannesses (tum'ah), the transgressions (peša'), and the sins (hatta't) of the people of Israel were removed from the sacred precincts (Lev 16:16, 19, 33 = 'taw0n, "iniquities," vss. 21–22). The problem comes in knowing what was the true nature of these sins, how they contaminated the sanctuary, and the role of the sacrificial rituals in securing the needed purification.

Several explanations have been proposed to explain how the sanctuary came into this state of contamination. For example, some authors hold that the Israelites brought the contamination when they came to the sanctuary with their sins.² According to others the contamination of the sanctuary derived from the contamination of the earth³ or of the encampment,⁴ since the sanctuary was located "in the midst of Israel." This would suggest that the sanctuary could be contaminated without the physical presence of the people in its courts.

It is also argued by some that sin has an "aerial" or "dynamic" quality and that on some "magnetic" or "demonic" principle all inadvertent and deliberate sins were attracted to the sanctuary, thereby contaminating it. Still other authors suggest that the sacrifices or the ritual condition of the people had a part to play in bringing about the contamination.

A variety of views have also been expressed in regard to the specific category of sins that was removed from the sanctuary on the Day of Atonement. Some authors suggest that the removal had to do with deliberate sins, or sins of ignorance, or both. Some distinguish between purification for the sins of the whole nation (annual) and individual purification (carried on during the year). According to some the Day of Atonement had to do with sins that were not atoned for during the year, and that had accumulated until that day. According to still others the annual rites purified the sanctuary of sins already forgiven during the year. The ritual value of the Day of Atonement is, therefore, understood differently by the several writers.

Actually, it is surprising to see how little importance is given by the scholarly community to the subject of the purification of the sanctuary. Considering the diversity of positions taken on this point by those who at least mention it, perhaps other scholars consider it prudent not to say too much about what does not seem clear. Furthermore, the idea that the Day of Atonement rituals reflect a later epoch has discouraged all efforts to understand the ritual itself as a unit, and this attitude has prevailed for more than a century. Due to this widespread opinion the majority of authors have turned to the historical-literary critical approach as the necessary method for understanding what appears to be confusing and poorly understood by the biblical writers.

In this chapter we will not attempt to respond directly to the diverse interpretations briefly alluded to above. We will give consideration instead to the various factors involved in the contamination and the purification of the sanctuary which will enable us to draw sound conclusions. We begin with the matter of contamination.

Contamination of the Sanctuary and Suppression of Worship

Many modern authors deny the historical authenticity of the Day of Atonement service because temple purification rites as recorded in the later historical books of the OT differ from those described in Leviticus 16.²¹ Since the rituals found in Leviticus 16 are more complex than these, the conclusion is drawn that the Day of Atonement rites represent a later elaboration.²² However, a careful analysis of the historical texts reveals that not only the rituals practiced at that time but also the worship situation of the nation was distinct. These facts, therefore, should be kept in mind lest one make a quick judgment concerning the historical validity of the Day of Atonement service.

The contamination of the sanctuary narrated in the historical books actually describes general or *national apostasy* which resulted in a total abandonment of the religious services of the temple (2 Chr 29:6–7; cf. vs. 3). Except for some attempts to bring about national repentance and for exceptional reforms that permitted the reestablishment of the worship (cf. 2 Chr 29:35b), this type of sanctuary contamination eventually became unsolvable (2 Chr 36:14, 16). As a result, it brought the punishment of God upon the entire nation (cf. Lev 26:27–33).²³ Thus, the temple, contaminated first by Israel's idolatrous rebellion, lost its reason for existence and was defiled further by the destruction wrought upon it by invading alien armies (Pss 74:7; 79:1; Ezek 7:22; 24:21; 25:3).

It is not surprising, therefore, at the subsequent reconditioning of the temple and reestablishment of the interrupted worship, to find the ritual centering only on the outer altar. Such a procedure was in total harmony with the sacrificial rites performed when the sanctuary services were first inaugurated (Exod 29:12, 36–37; Lev 8:15; 9:9, 15; Num 7:10–11, 84, 88). Such as procedure was in total harmony with the sacrificial rites performed when the sanctuary services were first inaugurated (Exod 29:12, 36–37; Lev 8:15; 9:9, 15; Num 7:10–11, 84, 88).

On the contrary the Day of Atonement (an established ritual) was designed to complete a worship sequence which had not been interrupted during the year. The rite was ordained as a "perpetual statute" to be held "each year" (Lev 16:29, 31, 34; 23:31; Heb 10:3). It was not instituted to initiate worship after a total spiritual collapse of the nation. Denying the historical authenticity of the Day of Atonement on these grounds lacks a basis. It confuses the inaugural rites of the religious year with those having to do with its conclusion.²⁶

Contamination of the Sanctuary and the Death Sentence

The situation which we have just described dealt with the sins of rebellion which reflected a general, national apostasy. We now ask, How did Israel solve the *hopeless* cases of individual rebellion when the persons involved were a minority? Were the worship services interrupted? Would the entire nation and its sanctuary be destroyed for the unpardonable sins of a small group of rebels? The answer is, of course, No! However, it should be asked if the rites of the Day of Atonement were designed to care for this class of sins.

At the outset it must be said that the only solution specified in the Israelite cultus for this type of contamination of the sanctuary was the death sentence for the guilty (Lev 15:31; 20:3-4; 21:12, 23; Num 19:13, 20; etc.). Actually, sacrifices were never offered for sins that could not be pardoned (cf. Heb 10:26-27). To the contrary, in such cases the execution itself of the guilty persons was considered a kind of sacrifice (Ezek 39:17-20; Isa 34:6; Jer 46:10; Zeph 1:8). All of this is emphasized in a special manner by the use of various Hebrew terms. We will now observe the theological value of some of these words as they relate to the death sentence.

Death Sentence and the Term kipper

kipper is used mainly in connection with the sacrifice for sin (Lev 4–6, 16, etc.).²⁷ Its commonly accepted meanings are "to rub" and "to erase," expressing the ideas of "purify" and "expiate." For further discussion see chapter 4 in this volume.

It is significant that the term could be used to describe the purification of the people and of the land by the execution of the rebels.³⁰ Thus it was taught that unpardonable sins could not be expiated by a substitute animal (1 Sam 3:14; cf. Isa 47:11).³¹ This was true as much for the guilty person as for the land or the people affected by the crime (Num 35:33). It is evident, therefore, that the sacrifices of the Day of Atonement did not care for such sins. Rather, these rites purified the sanctuary and the congregation from another kind of contamination, namely, that which had to do with pardonable sins (cf. Lev 16:30).

It is also of interest to notice that the earth which was thereby contaminated by the shedding of innocent blood was "the land in which ... I [God] dwell" (Num 35:34). At times its atonement was described as being made "before Yahweh" (2 Sam 21:3, 9).³² The principal expressions collected in Leviticus 20 to describe the death sentence for those guilty of a variety of defiant sins also reveals that the sanctuary and the name of God could be profaned in the contamination of the land (vs. 3).³³

If the congregation did not cleanse the land from these sins by carrying out the capital sentence, the consequences would be worse (vss. 4-5), because sooner or later the earth would vomit them out as it had vomited out the previous peoples through the judgments of God (cf. Lev 20:3, 22-23; 18:24-30).

Death Sentence and the TermBā'ar

This term is translated commonly "to burn." However, when it is placed in relationship to the death sentence, it carries the meaning "to exterminate," to purge," or "to get rid of." In this manner the word is used to mean "destroy/take away" of "evil" $(ra')^{37}$ or the guilt of "innocent blood" $(d\bar{a}m \ n\bar{a}q\hat{a})$.

The association of $b\bar{a}$ ar with the term kipper can be perceived clearly in the testimony of innocence required of the elders in a given area when it was not known who was the perpetrator of a murder (Deut 21:8–9).³⁹ The same ceremony that atoned (kipper) for the people also took away ($b\bar{a}$ ar) the guilt acquired through the criminal shedding of innocent blood.⁴⁰ $B\bar{a}$ ar also appears in parallelism with the Hebrew word, $k\bar{a}ra\underline{t}$, "to cut off" (1 Kgs 14:10; 21:21).⁴¹ This association links us again with the Day of Atonement in that it enables us to understand the significance of the death sentence ("cut

off") which was invoked against those who did not participate in the required spirit of contrition (Lev 23:29; cf. Ps 109:14–15 = $k\bar{a}ra\underline{t}$). This Day of Atonement action was a putting away of evil.

There is also a counterpart in the Day of Atonement death sentence with the series of laws in Exodus 21:12–17 which similarly required that the offender "shall be put to death" ($m\hat{o}\underline{t}$ $y\hat{u}m\bar{a}\underline{t}$). Those condemned to death in reality would be

"taken away" from the altar to be executed (Exod 21:14). Such persons did not have any right whatsoever in the worship of Yahweh.

Another detail in connection with $b\bar{a}$ ar relates to location. By means of the death sentence the evil is "taken away/exterminated" "from the midst of you," $miqqirbek\bar{a}$ (Deut 17:7; 19:19; 21:9, 21; 22:21; 24:7) or "from Israel," $miyyiśr\bar{a}$ ' $\bar{e}l$ (Deut 17:12; 19:13; 22:22; Judg 20:13). The same idea is present when the term kipper is used as has been noted earlier (Num 35:33–34). This is an important point since numerous passages describe God as living "in the midst of His people," 43

and His sanctuary was viewed as sanctifying all the land of Israel (cf. Num 14:21; Isa 6:3).

The land in which the Israelites lived was above all "the land of the possession of Yahweh" (Josh 22:19; Lev 25:23; Ps 24:1; cf. Deut 23:14). For this reason, although with different degrees of tolerance, the sins committed in the land affected the sanctuary, and the extermination of the rebels was carried out "so that the Lord may turn from the fierceness of His anger, and show you mercy" (Deut 13:17; cf. 19:17–20).

This description of the matter is presented also in many eschatological passages of the OT, particularly in Isaiah 4:3-4 where the term $b\bar{a}$ appears again. While a remnant, whose names are inscribed among the living in Jerusalem, escape the condemnation, the city is purified of "the bloodstains"—symbol of the crimes committed there (Isa 59:3; cf. 1:15; Ezek 24:6; etc.) through the "extermination" ($b\bar{a}$ ar, "spirit of burning") of the guilty. Thus we see that the basic idea in this use of ($b\bar{a}$ ar) is the purification of the community. "The evildoer must be removed."

Death Sentence and the Term Sûr

Sûr is generally translated "to separate," take away [one thing from another]," or "remove." Some examples: dismemberment—Goliath's head is separated from his body (1 Sam 17:46); one person from another—Saul is put away from David (2 Sam 7:15); shame can be taken away (1 Sam 17:26); iniquity or blame may be removed (Isa 1:16; 6:7), etc.

Its use in connection with the death sentence is especially significant in the case of Joab, David's former general (1 Kgs 2:31). The execution of Joab removes the guilt from the Davidic monarchy that was incurred by his shedding of innocent blood. In this instance the term bears the same meaning that has been observed in Deuteronomy 19:12–13; 21:9 with respect to the term $b\bar{a}'ar$. The guilt for the shedding of "the innocent blood" is "taken away" in both cases by the sentence of death being carried out. This shows once more that so long as the guilty one is not executed, accountability for the crime remains, and only the execution of the truly guilty person can clear it.

In this context it should be observed that the innocent blood spilled by assassination is to fall back upon the assassin. This is because the blood of an innocent man is not accepted as a sacrifice (Gen 9:6; cf. Exod 20:13). In a certain sense, the shed blood of the innocent provisionally charges the fault of the assassination to the land and the people and thus contaminates them (Num 35:33; Deut 21:8–9; Ps 106:38). Due to this, the evil should be "taken away" from the innocent (whether they be living or deceased) and placed upon the guilty one in a manner clearly indicating his condemnation (1 Kgs 2:31–33; Ps 94:21, 23; cf. Josh 2:19).

The term itself, "innocent blood," denies the idea of substitution. Blood thus spilled cannot atone or justify the assassin. Therefore, avenging the shedding of innocent blood seems to suggest the taking away of the provisionally charged guilt from the land and from the innocent community, causing it to fall back upon the head of the guilty (Joel 3:21; cf. vs. 7; Rev 6:10).

Death Sentence and the Term Nāśā

The verb $n\bar{a}$ s \bar{a} means "to take, to charge," "to bear." It is often used in connection with worship and sacrifice (usages we will give consideration to later). In relationship to the death sentence it is linked with "iniquity"—' \bar{a} wôn, "he shall bear his iniquity" (Lev 20:17, 19); with "sin"—ha!!a'!, "they shall bear their sin" (Lev 20:20); and with "prostitution," as idolatry— $z^e n \hat{u}_!$, "bear the consequences of your lewdness and harlotry" (Ezek 23:35; cf. Num 14:33).

These unpardonable sins, therefore, were to be "borne" by those responsible, and by no one else. Such persons could find no legal means to dispose of their evil. The application of the sentence might be delayed (Num 14:34),46 but death ultimately would be the result and would reach every rebel, as can be seen from the expression, "your sin will find you out" (Num 32:23).

While the execution of the death sentence might be delayed, the negative consequences of the sin might be "borne" sometimes by innocent persons (Num 14:33). Although at times the destruction of the descendants was avoided, such descendants could, in certain instances, "bear" the consequences of their fathers' sin in being deprived of their blessings or special privileges (Ezek 44:10–14). This deprival could last either during the lifetime of the guilty (Num 14:33)—three generations (Deut 23:8; cf. Exod 20:5), or ten (Deut 23:2-3), 47 or indefinitely (Ezek 44:10–14).

This again indicates that the death of the rebels not only "atones," "exterminates," or "takes away" the evil or contamination from the land and people, but it also frees (except in special cases) the innocent from the consequences of the sin committed.

Conclusion. The use of these four biblical expressions allows us, without danger of error, to say that unpardonable sins (sins that contaminated the land and the people, in the midst of which and among whom God dwelt) could not be atoned for, nor exterminated, nor eliminated from the nation through a sacrifice for sin. The only known solution was the death sentence executed upon the guilty, a sentence which (in certain extreme cases) could have an effect also on the descendants through certain penalties.

This is, in reality, the background for certain strange prayers in which it is asked that the sins of the wicked not be atoned for (*kipper*) or blotted out from God's sight (Jer 18:23). Rather, "Let them be before the Lord continually" (Ps 109:14–15). That is, the prayer is that such should remain open before God, until the death sentence should be executed upon the guilty ones (Isa 22:14). The idea that the blood rites of the Day of Atonement purified the people and their sanctuary from such unpardonable sins lacks a biblical basis (1 Sam 3:14).

We should, however, define in a more suitable manner the nature of the sins which in Israel were punishable by death. This is a matter which often has been misunderstood.

Unpardonable Sins

It has been thought that the Hebrew term peša' ("rebellion," "transgression"), 48 was used to describe unpardonable sins, although sins of this class were blotted out on the Day of Atonement (Lev 16:16, 21). 49 However, this term, like the larger number of terms found in the Bible to define sin, describes pardonable as well as unpardonable sins (cf. Exod 34:7; Num 14:18; etc.). 50

Due to the distinction made in Numbers 15:29—31 between inadvertent, unconscious sins and high-handed sins (the last ones unpardonable), it has been thought that only the former were permitted to be forgiven in the sanctuary ritual. Nevertheless, it may be demonstrated that a distinction between involuntary and voluntary sins does not correspond necessarily to pardonable and unpardonable sins. We will see that atonement by sacrifice was not barred to the intentional sinner who repented.

Deliberate sins and repentance. Certain Levitical ordinances distinguish between involuntary, inadvertent sins, hatta't (Lev 4) and deliberate, conscious sins, atta't (Lev 5). Among the latter may be mentioned the false oath pronounced before Yahweh by a thief (Lev 6:2–7; cf. 19:11–13). This fact is more surprising when we take into consideration that commitments taken in the name of God were viewed as irrevocable (Exod 20:7; Lev 19:12; Num 30:2; Deut 23:21–23; Josh 9:19; Judg 11:35; etc.). Likewise, it would appear that the sin of blasphemy was never annulled or ameliorated (Exod 22:28; Lev 24:11–17; 1 Kgs 21:10, 13). How then can it be that in Leviticus 6:2–7 atonement is being offered to the thief who swore falsely in the name of God?

It would appear that the circumstances themselves play a very important part,⁵¹ and not only the sinful act itself. Here, for example, is a thief who uses the name of Yahweh to hide his lie in a difficult situation where there are no clear proofs of his sin. His voluntary repentance later on allows for the fault to be "reduced" to the condition of an involuntary sin. Genuine repentance was, therefore, a definite factor in securing the mitigation of divine retribution.⁵²

Outside the Levitical codes there are other examples of deliberate sins that were reduced by repentance to the status of involuntary sins.⁵³ Among these may be mentioned the sins of David (2 Sam 12:13; cf. Ps 51:1–4, 9–12; 2 Sam 24:10); the abominable weakness of Ahab (1 Kgs 21:25–29); the murdering apostasy of Manasseh (2 Chr 33:3–19); Josiah's touch of conscience in the name of the nation (2 Kgs 22:18–20); and in a more general way, the positive reaction of Nineveh (Jonah 3:4–10).⁵⁴

Although the death sentence was applied only in the cases of conscious or premeditated sins, it must not be deduced from this that all such sins were punished by death. Among the deliberate sins, only those committed "with a raised hand," $b^e y \bar{a} d r \bar{a} m \bar{a} h$ (Num 15:30) in open rebellion, defiantly confronting God, could not be atoned. And this was determined by certain special circumstances.

Special circumstances in which sin could not be atoned. It is not possible in a short chapter to give consideration to all the elements that affected the application of the death sentence.⁵⁵ We restrict ourselves to the relationship such punishable sins had with the sanctuary.

The apparently excessive severity of the laws of the Pentateuch may be understood better if we note the situation or context in which they were ordained: during Israel's Exodus travel. At that time the nation was either encamped beside a mountain or a tent over which the presence of divinity was manifested.⁵⁶ The privilege of being "neighbor" to God, therefore, entailed a greater responsibility for Israel than if they had lived more remotely from the sanctuary (Num 2:2; cf. Exod 33:5–7). There was a greater risk of contaminating the divine sanctuary and the sacred character of the worship (Lev 15:31). For this reason, it would appear that at times God hesitated between placing the tent outside the camp or destroying His people for their rebellion.⁵⁷

For this reason also, the laws were much more severe for the priests than for the people (cf. Lev 10:9; Ezek 44:21; Lev 21:4, 17–23), and still more strict for the high priests (Lev 21:10–15). No day was so charged with warnings and threats of death as the day when the high priest entered the most holy place (Lev 16:1–2; 23:29–30).⁵⁸

However, once they were in the promised land the risk of contaminating the sanctuary was less direct (cf. Josh 22:19), and the consciousness of the divine presence was more difficult to maintain. One of the purposes for required attendance at the three principal feasts of the year would seem to have been the need to maintain alive (as a reminder to the people) the reality of the presence of God in their midst (Exod 23:14–19; 34:18–26; Deut 16:1–17; Lev 23; Deut 31:10–13).

In this connection we may include the requirement to add certain teaching devices to the domestic religious teachings of the children to stimulate the memory (Deut 6:7–9; 11:18–21).⁵⁹ Eventually the nation was directed by the prophets to remember the blessings and curses that weighed upon them for the privilege of living in "the land of the Lord" (Hos 9:3; Jer 16:18; cf. Lev 26; Deut 27:11–26; 28:1–68).⁶⁰

In spite of all these adopted measures and stern warnings the conservation of the religious and national ties to God were not maintained, and both the divine patience and tolerance became more evident. The glory of God is then described as being asleep or hidden from the nation (Ps 44:23-24; Isa 64:7; etc.).

nation did not have a sufficient number of people of moral worth and courage to impose its will upon an apostate majority. The death sentence could not be applied to the rebellious, and the God of the Bible is portrayed as calling upon the pagans to punish His people.

Finally, God is described as forsaking "his dwelling at Shiloh" and delivering "his power to captivity, his glory to the hand of the foe" (Ps 78:60-61; cf. 1 Sam 4:4-22). That such a situation could develop is due in part to the fact that the

Conclusion. Although certain unpardonable sins seem to be well defined in the Pentateuch, it must be admitted that in actual practice the circumstances played an important role in determining the seriousness of the fault and in administering the punishment. When the people as a whole were on good terms with God, or when the spirit of repentance was general, the continued disobedience and apostasy of the individual or minority was punished by death. For that reason "all [kol] the congregation" was, in principle, to participate in or consent to the punishment (Num 15:35). In such a situation even sins that could have been atoned might acquire the characteristics of sins "with raised hand," and be punished by death.

This is precisely the picture that is presented on the Day of Atonement (Lev 16:29; 23:27, 29–30; Num 29:7). Those who did not participate in the spirit of humiliation manifested their contempt for the work of purification done in their favor in the sanctuary and did not have the right to live. In other words, all the rebels—in the style of Nadab and Abihu (Lev 10; 16:1)—and all those who rejected the divine means for purification (Lev 15:31) were not among those who were purified on the Day of Atonement (Lev 16:30). The rites of the sanctuary in no way benefited them.

Contamination of the Sanctuary and Day of Atonement

Scholars have had great difficulty in determining the reason why there should be a new cleansing on the Day of Atonement for sins already pardoned during the year. This is because the difference between the rites carried on during the year and the rites conducted on the Day of Atonement at the end of the year has not been perceived. Therefore, we shall examine in brief what was atoned for during the year and what was atoned for on the Day of Atonement.

Use of the Term kipper in Sacrifices for Sin

The verb *kipper* appears in the OT 101 times and is used most frequently in relationship to worship. 42 As we have observed earlier, the two meanings most commonly accepted are "to rub, to erase" with the idea of "purification," or "atonement," alluding to the means used to erase sin. It thus has a relationship with the verb māḥāh, meaning "to erase" or "to blot out." 43

In this connection we note the syntactical combinations of the verb kipper which can shed light on the necessity for the Day of Atonement:

- 1. Kipper + 'al. This common combination is used to describe atonement for persons or things. 64
- Kipper + 'al + min. In this instance the priest "atones" (kipper) "for" ('al) in order to remove sin "from" (min) either a person (Lev 4:26) or a place (Lev 16:16). 65

2.

- 3. $Kipper + l^e$. This expression carries the sense of "to atone to" or "for" someone.
- 4. Kipper $+b^{e'}a\underline{d}$. This expression likewise carries the nuance "to atone in favor of" someone (Lev 16:6).
 - Kipper + 'ēt. In Hebrew grammar the particle 'ēt is the sign which marks or indicates the direct object. Thus, in this construction 'ēt indicates the object which should be atoned (cf. Lev 16:20, 33).66

5.

An analysis of the passages employing *kipper* reveals that atonement for sin was not simply an automatic process. The ritual acts resulted in the purification (Lev 12:7; 14:53) or the pardon of the one who made the offering (Lev 4:31, 35; 5:10, 13, 15, 16, 18; Num 15:28; etc.), but it was God who granted his petitions and desires. Atonement was also related to persons or objects not previously purified or consecrated (Exod 29:36–37; Lev 8:15, 33–34).

It is important to underscore the point, however, that neither the sacrifices for the sins of the priests or people offered throughout the year, haṭṭā't (Lev 4), nor the sacrifices for guilt, 'āšām (Lev 5), nor those offered for physical impurities, tame (Lev 12:6–8), had the sanctuary itself as the direct object in view. Rather, it was the *individual* who received the impact of the atoning act (see above No. 1, kipper + 'al, "The priest shall make atonement for him," Lev 4:35; 5:6, 10, 13; 12:6–8, emphasis supplied).

The distinction between the daily ritual and that of the Day of Atonement is emphasized further in the use of *kipper* and 'et, the sign of the direct object (see above No. 5, *kipper* + 'et). The sign of the direct object is used only in the final purification or cleansing of the sanctuary on the Day of Atonement. In the daily sacrificial rituals the sins and impurities of individuals were atoned for and transferred to the sanctuary. The Day of Atonement now focuses upon the cleansing of that sanctuary.

The same idea is reenforced with the use of the preposition *min* (see above No. 2, *kipper* + 'al + *min*). In the daily rituals sin was taken *from* the penitent who sacrificed a sin offering ("the priest shall make atonement [*kipper*] for ['al] him for [*min* = from] his sin, and he shall be forgiven," Lev 4:26; 15:30–31). On the Day of Atonement a parallel action transpired: the sins of penitent Israel were taken *from* the sanctuary ("thus he shall make atonement [*kipper*] for ['al] the holy place, [from, *min*] the uncleannesses of the people of Israel, and [from, *min*] their transgressions, all their sins; and so shall he do for the tent of meeting, which abides with them in the midst of their uncleannesses," Lev 16:16).

All of this allows us to make an important distinction between the atoning rites carried on in the sanctuary throughout the year and those that were carried out on the Day of Atonement. The daily rituals transferred sin and impurity to the sanctuary; the yearly ritual (Day of Atonement) removed this deposit away from the sanctuary.

Now we turn our attention to review the way the sins of the people (confessed and pardoned throughout the year) could contaminate the sanctuary.

Criteria for Contamination and Purification in the OT

Another area of study (related to the preceding discussion) is concerned with the nature of the contamination dealt with in Leviticus 16. Some view the blood of sacrificial sin offerings (offered throughout the year) as functioning like a "ritual detergent" which would purge—not contaminate—the sanctuary. Hence, the view would be that while "sin contaminates, blood purifies."

A closer analysis of the criteria for contamination in the OT becomes necessary now in order to see whether this conviction is as uniform as has been believed. It is essential to endeavor first to understand the mind-set of the Israelite in his biblical, Near Eastern context before we can draw valid applications in terms of our Western thought patterns. Actions that resulted in some form of personal contamination (ultimately relating to the sanctuary) may be classified within three general categories as follows:

First Category—Contamination by Contact With Dead Animals and Certain Other Situations

- 1. Dead unclean animals (Lev 11:8, 10-20, 23-38, 41-43; 20:25).
- 2. Clean animals that died of themselves, the blood not spilled (Lev 11:39-40; 17:15-16; cf. vs. 13; 22:8).
- 3. Clean animals sacrificed for sin, touched by a clean person or object of the sanctuary (Num 19:7-10, 19-21; 6:26-27; 10:17; 16:24, 26-28).
- 4. Indirect contacts with that which had been contaminated by human impurity—see second category (Lev 15:5-12, 16-23, 27; 22:4-6; Num 19:22; cf. Lev 5:3).
- 5. Normal flux of human semen (Lev 15:16-18; cf. Deut 23:10-11; 1 Sam 21:4-5).71
- 6. Entrance into a leprous house closed by the priest for observation (Lev 14:46-47).

General characteristics of the first category of contamination:

- 1. The contamination may be termed as "light." Its duration was until nightfall.⁷²
- 2. The only purification required was the washing of the contaminated individual or object.
- 3. There was contamination, but no charge of guilt; there was no threat of death, at least not in the first case.
- 4. Results from not complying with required purification:
 - A. He "[bore] his iniquity" (Lev 17:16).
 - B. If an Israelite was unaware of his error, he was required to offer a sin offering when the matter became known to him (Lev 5:2-3, 5-6).

It is evident that in these cases (in spite of the declaration that the individual was in a state of uncleanness until evening) contact with a dead animal did not affect seriously the spiritual life of an Israelite. This would seem to be alluded to in the expression, "I wash my hands in innocence" (Pss 26:6; 73:13).⁷³ The apostle Paul also found inspiration in these laws and gave them a spiritual application when he said, "Be angry but do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger" (Eph 4:26; cf. Lev 22:7).

It should be noted that the carcasses of clean animals whose blood had not been removed were treated the same as unclean animals. Their blood converted them into something that could not be eaten; that is, it rendered them unclean. Their blood converted them into something that could not be eaten; that is, it rendered them unclean. Their blood converted them into something that could not be eaten; that is, it rendered them unclean. Their blood converted them into something that could not be eaten; that is, it rendered them unclean. Their blood converted them into something that could not be eaten; that is, it rendered them unclean.

Mention should also be made of the fact that contamination through contact with the carcass of a clean animal whose blood was not spilled (Lev 11:39–40; 17:15) was the same as it would have been if the same animal had been eaten. Something similar occurred through the eating of, and by contact with, the sacrificial offerings for sin (Lev 10:17; 6:24–29; 16:24).⁷⁵

From our analysis of this first category of contamination it may be seen that the blood of sacrificial animals did not always purify. This may serve as a basis to suggest that the Israelite sanctuary was contaminated by the blood rites of the year and not purified. This was, in effect, a legal contamination, 76 very light, that did not affect either the honor or the holiness of the sanctuary, but required its purification after a certain time.

- 1. Human corpse:
 - a. Touched by the people (Num 19:11-20; 31:17; 19-24).
 - b. Touched by the Nazirite (Num 6:6-12).
 - c. Touched by the priest (Lev 21:1-4; Ezek 44:25-26; cf. Lev 10:4-5).
 - d. Never touched by the high priest (Lev 21:10-12; cf. Lev 10:6-7).
- 2. Human flux through illness⁷⁷ (Lev 15:2-3, 13-15).
- 3. Flux of blood through menstruation, illness, or childbirth (Lev 12; 15:19, 24-27, 28-31), spilled "life" (cf. Lev 17:11, 14).

General characteristics of the second category of contamination:

- 1. The contamination was more serious; it lasted seven days after contact.⁷⁸
- 2. Requirement for purification:
 - a. Washing as in the previous category (Lev 15:13; Num 19:12-13, 17-19; 31:19-20, 23-24).
 - b. Sacrifices:
 - (1) Both a sin offering and a burnt offering if the contamination was from human blood or genital illness (Lev 12:6-8; 5:14-15; 15:29-30).
 - (2) Sprinkling of holy water (derived from the sin offering of the red heifer) upon the person contact with a human corpse (Num 19:9). A sin offering, a burnt offering, and a guilt offering for the Nazirite.
- 3. Results from not complying with required purification:
 - a. The risk of illegal contamination of the sanctuary (Lev 15:31; Num 19:13, 20).
 - b. The explicit threat of death (Lev 15:31).

It can be seen that the second category of contamination was a great deal more serious than the first. God did not accept human impurity (death in its various forms) but only a substitution by the blood of an animal. Contamination by contact with the dead seriously affected the sanctity of those who had consecrated themselves to God (the Nazirite), although not irremediably if the prescribed rites of purification were observed. The contamination derived by contact with the dead on the part of the high priest was, on the other hand, fatal. No purification rites were prescribed in his case. This was due to the fact that "the consecration of the anointing oil of his God ... [was] upon him," and his profanation was placed in close relationship with the profanation of "the sanctuary of his God" (Lev 21:12).

Ezekiel 9:7 states that the sanctuary was contaminated by the bodies of those who were condemned by the judgment of God and was a factor in His withdrawal from the temple and its destruction (at least as far as Ezekiel's vision is concerned). In the actual events which later took place in Jerusalem under the Babylonians the desanctification of the temple was complete. After the captivity only the inaugural rites of purification for the temple were observed, and these were conducted in the court.

ual was conducted for purification in these instances.⁷⁹ In Ezekiel 9 the bodies remained in the temple, and God left. In the other cases the process was just the reverse: the bodies were removed from the sanctuary, and God remained in it. The Day of Atonement rites of purification described in Leviticus 16, therefore, had nothing to do with this kind of contamination. The purification of the sanctuary on this special day obviously did not last seven days (as did the instances in the second category), but only one.

Finally, it should be remembered that those persons who were condemned to death in Israel for whatever reasons were not executed in the sanctuary nor in the camp (Lev 24:14, 23; Num 15:35–36; Acts 7:58; 21:28–30). The practice

Nothing is said about the contamination of the sanctuary by the bodies of Nadab and Abihu nor about the bodies of Nadab and Abihu nor about the princes who were destroyed in the rebellion of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram. It is not recorded that any type of rit-

followed for dealing with corpses, condemned criminals, and lepers was always the same: removal from the temple and beyond the city limits (cf. Num 12:10, 14–15; 2 Chr 26:16, 19–21). They were "cut off" (kāraṭ) from the midst of their people (cf. Lev 23:29).

According to what has been noted already, the execution of the condemned person had in itself a purifying value. The only thing that remained in the sanctuary complex until the Day of Atonement was a record of the blood of animals that took the place of human sin and impurity, and this was only in those cases where the purification of the sinner was possible.

Third Category—Contamination by Leprosy (Lev 13–14):

- 1. Cultural and social death—total exclusion from Israel and from the temple (Lev 13).
- 2. The healing (resurrection) did not authorize the leper to participate immediately in the social and religious life of the nation. Although it was declared four times, "he shall be clean" (Lev 14:7-9, 20), there was a sequence of several rites in which he was required to participate during the process of his integration into the life of the nation.
- 3. The purification rites for the healed leper were distinctive, but they did have some elements similar to the other purification rites. We note some comon points:
 - a. With purification from contact with a human corpse—use of cedar, scarlet, and hyssop (Lev 14:4-7; Num 19:6).
 - b. With the Day of Atonement—two birds, one goes free; two goats, one goes free (Lev 14:4-7b, 49-53; 16:5, 7-10, 15-22).
 - c. With purification of the Nazirite—shaving the hair (Lev 14:8–9; Num 6:9).
 - d. With purification of the first category—on the same day, washing his clothes and himself (Lev 14:8; 11:40; etc.).
 - e. With all the cases of the second category—seven days (Lev 14:9; sacrificing both a sin offering and a burnt offering (Lev 14:19–20; etc.).
 - f. With the consecration of the priesthood at the inauguration of the sanctuary—anointing tip of right ear, right thumb, right toe with blood; anointing with oil (Lev 14:14–18; 8:23–24, 30; Exod 29:6–7).

Our Western logic runs into certain difficulties here. In the biblical pattern it is the *healed* leper who must purify himself, not the one who continued in his leprous condition. As soon as he was declared pure by the first rite, he had to proceed to purify himself again and again in different stages, four times altogether and by all kinds of purification rites. The similarity of these rites with all the other cases of impurities, indicates once again that the healed leper had to undergo those steps to purification which were related to the two previous categories. These rites were a part of the integration process by which the ex-leper returned to the social and religious life of Israel.

these ordinances. These were necessary at a time when such measures as we have to resolve problems of pollution were not available (cf. Deut 23:13-14) and where the climate also may have had a part. On the other hand some of these laws seem to have been established as an antidote against certain pagan rites of a sexual type which would have been excluded totally from Israelite worship.⁸¹

Above these concerns we may perceive theological insights and teaching procedures in the categories just summarized. These laws especially found their reason for being in Israel's system of worship.⁸² In the Israelite religion the tem-

Conclusion. The reasons for the existence of such laws are not determined easily inasmuch as the biblical text is silent on the matter. 80 However, there is no doubt that a very rigorous principle of hygiene is to be found at the base of

Above these concerns we may perceive theological insights and teaching procedures in the categories just summarized. These laws especially found their reason for being in Israel's system of worship. En the Israelite religion the temple accepted human impurity only when it was substituted by the "lighter" impurity which a clean animal could contract and transmit. That is, human impurity could only reach the sanctuary indirectly. The extreme case, that of leprosy, reveals on the other hand the loss of all spiritual life. The situation of the leper was similar to that of Israel in captivity with its temple in ruins (Lam 4:15). At that time the leper could only place his hopes on God in the heavenly sanctuary (cf. 1 Kgs 8:38–39).

Areas and Degrees of Sanctity and of Contamination

It has been thought that the contamination of the sanctuary interrelated only with the contamination of the camp or of the city, but not of the land, since the lepers were banished from those areas. This conclusion, however, is not shared by all authors. On the other hand it is never said in the biblical records that the land was contaminated by leprosy. It is evident that the expulsion had to do with the danger of contagion (cf. Lev 13; 14:33–48).

That which contaminated the land, as we have seen explicitly stated, was the blood that was spilled upon it unjustly and the practice of idolatry. A causal relationship between contaminated land and the illegal contamination of the sanctuary cannot be denied (cf. Num 35:33-34; Lev 20:3, 22; etc.).⁸⁵

Apart from these rebellious and defiant acts which naturally contaminated both the land and sanctuary, there were some differences which had more to do with the degree of tolerance than with the contamination itself. A closer con-

Apart from these rebellious and defiant acts which naturally contaminated both the land and sanctuary, there were some differences which had more to do with the degree of tolerance than with the contamination itself. A closer consideration of these various areas and their degree of sanctity will enable us to see in a more precise manner the way the sins and impurities of Israel could reach the sanctuary in a legal manner without provoking the unquenchable wrath of God who lived in it. The danger of direct contamination could be measured (among other reasons) by the distance of the location for a particular rite from the inner precincts of the sanctuary.

- 1. The leper outside the camp. Among those who contracted physical impurities the leper was removed the furthest from the temple. He was banished from the midst of the congregation of Israel (Lev 13:45–46) regardless of his or her social standing (Num 12:14; cf. 2 Kgs 15:5; 2 Chr 26:21). In order to attest a leper's claim to be healed the priest was obliged to leave the camp or city to examine him (Lev 14:3). If healing had occurred, the first rites of purification were also applied in that location (Lev 14:4–8). Nevertheless, these preliminary ceremonies did not free him from his state of impurity, but only from his exclusion from the congregation.
- 2. The ritually impure outside the sanctuary court. The purified leper at the close of his initial rites of purification retained at that point a state of impurity similar to those cases of the ritually impure who were not required to be expelled from the camp or city (Lev 14:8). For this reason certain further rites of purification by water had to be performed (Lev 14:9; cf. 15:13, etc.) before he was able to present himself in the court of the sanctuary for his final stage of purification by means of sacrifices (Lev 14:10-31; cf. 15:14-15, 29-30).

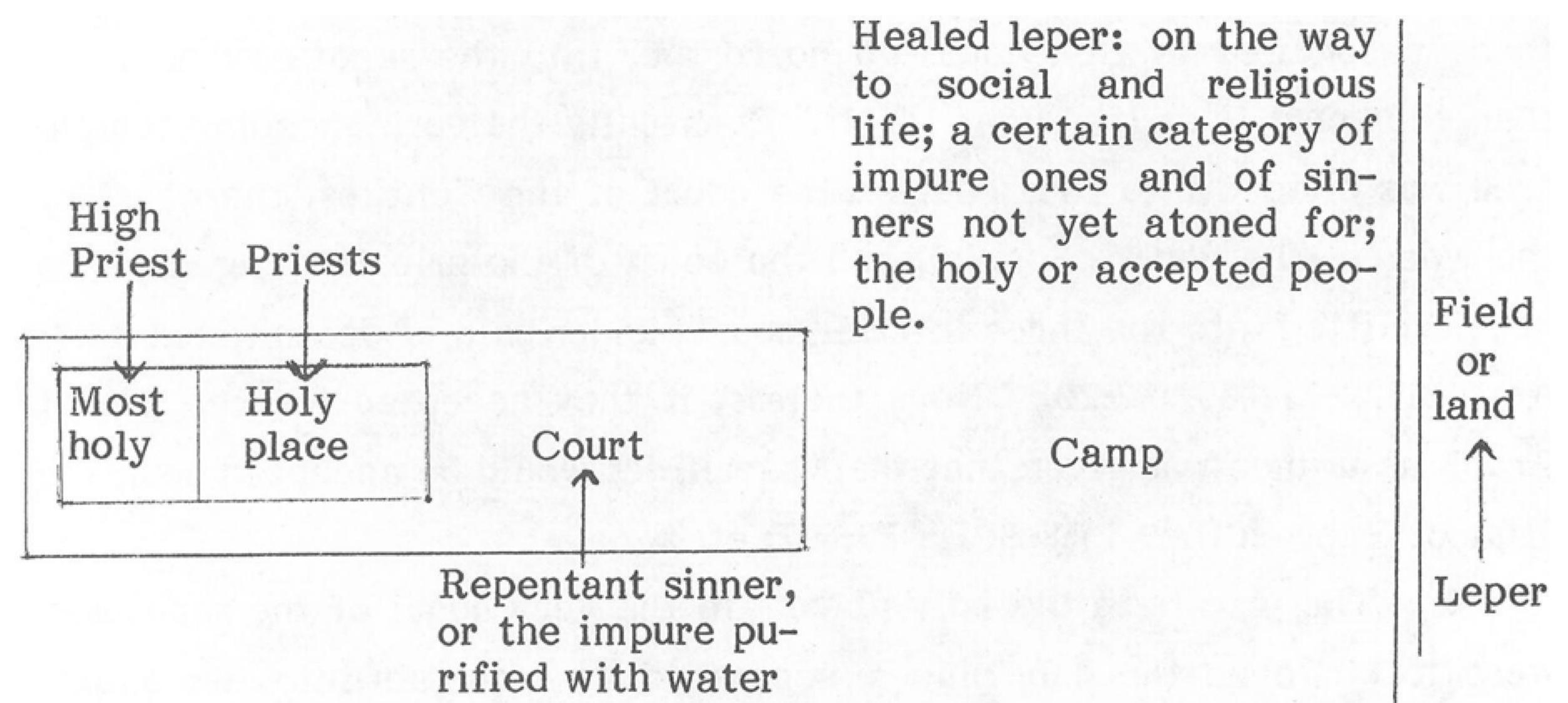
These rites of purification by water had as their main objective the return of the physically impure to the same level as those who had to be purified from their sins—ḥaṭṭāʾṯ, "sin," (Lev 12:6; 15:15, 30); ʾāšām, "guilt," (Lev 14:12–13).

- 3. The sinners in the court of the sanctuary. The laity who desired to be reconciled to God could go no further into the sanctuary complex than the court (Lev 1:3; 4:24; 14:11). Eventually the corresponding temple area was divided into four courts: the court of the Gentiles, the court of the women, the court of Israel, and the court of the priests. Pagans were not permitted into the three interior courts under pain of death (Ezek 44:7; Acts 21:28–31, 36; 22:22). Nevertheless, if they accepted the religion of Israel, assurance was given that their sacrifices would be accepted upon the altar of Yahweh (Lev 17:8–9; Isa 56:6–7; etc).
- 4. The priests in the holy place. In the very heart of the sanctuary were to be found the holy places, separated by a curtain into two apartments designated a "holy place" and a "most holy place" (Exod 26:33). The holy place was the area where only the priests could present themselves before the Lord to obtain their reconciliation—or that of the people when the sin that was committed had a general complicity (Lev 4:5-7, 16-18).

Perhaps this was permitted because the priests could commit faults as human beings in the court (cf. Lev 4:3) without necessarily suffering the sentence of death (Num 18:1b). Consequently, they would have to go farther inside to regain their purity, but never to the most holy place. Of course, as representatives of the people (cf. Lev 10:17), they naturally interceded for them in the holy place.

5. The high priest in the most holy place. After the death of the two sons of Aaron, burnt by God Himself because they improperly carried out the duties of their office, Moses was instructed that only the high priest would be permitted to enter the most holy place, and that entrance would be but once a year (Lev 16:1–4). This was the climactic point, the only possibility of appearing in the presence of God Himself without a curtain to hide Him and without being condemned to death (Lev 16:12–13). It was the final expiation of the religious year that had the sanctuary as its main object.

We may now summarize in chart form the procedures Israel followed in order to avoid direct contamination of the sanctuary by either the sinner or his sins.



Conclusion. The people could not approach the sanctuary like a priest without the risk of death (Num 18:22; cf. 17:13). Nevertheless they could come with a substitute animal. The priests and Levites were the only ones who could commit faults in the temple area without being condemned by God (Num 18:1, 23). The divine tolerance with the priests on this point in no way nullified the strict laws which governed the qualifications for the priesthood and their conduct both in the rituals and in their private lives.⁸⁶

The insights gathered from the above survey indicate that the impurity or sin contracted in or outside the camp reached the sanctuary either directly or indirectly. In the case of the leper, if he were to present himself at the sanctury without performing the preliminary rites of purification, he would contaminate the tabernacle of Yahweh and, therefore, would have suffered the death sentence (Lev 15:31).

On the other hand all the rites of purification performed by the people in the court of the sanctuary—and by the priests for their personal sins in the holy place—truly purified them. But at the same time these rites caused the sanctuary to be contaminated. This legal type of contamination was, however, so attenuated that the honor and sanctity of the divine Majesty could bear with it until the end of the year when the sanctuary itself was purified. This contaminating//cleansing concept and process now deserves our attention in some detail.

PURIFICATION OF THE SANCTUARY

Editorial synopsis. One reason why modern Bible students have difficulty in understanding the Israelite sacrificial system is because they examine it with Western logic. But Israel's worship is appreciated better if the presence of Eastern thought patterns are recognized. For example, the sanctuary system presents to the Westerner a paradoxical concept: sacrificial blood has both a defiling//cleansing function! The writer has chosen to name this paradox, "the principle of substitutional interchange."

Through the manipulation of sacrificial blood the sins and impurities move from the penitent to the sanctuary and "legally" contaminate it. At the same time, however, the atoning and cleansing function of the blood is directed toward the penitent, and he is forgiven and purified. In this transaction God (in the figure of the sanctuary) takes upon Himself the sins of the repentant sinner until the Day of Atonement. The assumption of the sins God forgives is expressed clearly in His proclamation before Moses, which translates literally, "Yahweh, Yahweh ... who *bears* iniquity, rebellion, and sin ..." (Exod 34:6–7).

There are, therefore, sins that God takes upon Himself (those that have been confessed and pardoned), and others that He rejects (those never confessed by the sinner who spurns His mercy).

Thus it may be said that the sanctuary could be contaminated by the sins of Israel in two ways: (1) legal contamination by means of the blood rites carried on during the year in behalf of repentant sinners, and (2) illegal contamination by means of deliberate sinning (especially the shedding of innocent blood, idolatry, and neglect of the rites for purification) for which no forgiveness or purification was sought.

It is the author's view that the Day of Atonement dealt with both categories of sins and sinners, but in two different ways. The Day of Atonement rites purified the sanctuary of the formerly pardoned sins of the penitent (Lev 16). But impenitent Israelites bore accountability for their own sins and were cut off from the congregation of Israel (Lev 23:29–30).

Since the sanctuary assumed the responsibility for the forgiven sins transferred to it during the year, it was obviously not the cause of those sins and impurities. Thus, in a sense, the sacrifice of the Lord's goat on the Day of Atonement was in favor of the sanctuary and vindicated the God who abode there. It may be said that the sins which God did not bear (because they were not transferred to the sanctuary by sacrifice) fell back upon the guilty to their eternal perdition. On the other hand the sins which God had accepted to bear upon Himself (in the figure of the sanctuary) now fell upon the one accountable for sin: the scapegoat for Azazel.

Editor's Note

The sanctuary, designed as a ritual parable (Heb 9:9, "figure," "symbolic" = Gr. parabolē), illustrated the gospel or plan of salvation to ancient Israel (Heb 4:1-2). In its broad emphasis it foreshadowed the atoning death and priestly ministry of Christ and final judgment (Heb 10:1; 8:4-5).

Final judgment will consummate the plan of salvation and will bring to an end the long reign of sin (Acts 17:31). Since the final judgment (in its three phases) clears God and His people, brings Satan and his followers to account, and banishes sin and its effects from the earth, it is the appropriate antitype of the Day of Atonement which did the same in a ritual manner for the sanctuary and Israel. As the culminating ritual, it restored the sanctuary and the camp/nation to a state of purification.

In this sense, the Day of Atonement type (Lev 16) is a microcosm of the final judgment, the initial phase of which is depicted in the parallel passages of Daniel 7–8 (the preadvent phase in heaven). In the sanctuary type four entities are represented in the Day of Atonement setting: (1) God who (in the figure of the sanctuary) bore for a time the confessed sins of the repentant; (2) believing Israelites who had participated in the saving provisions of the ritual and who remained in a penitent relationship with God; (3) impenitent Israelites whose idolatry, bloodshedding, open sinning and general neglect of the sanctuary provisions had defiled illegally the sanctuary and who continued in that attitude; and (4) the scapegoat, a symbol of Satan.

In the three phases of the final judgment similar entities will be involved. A sentence of acquital will be given in favor of the saints whose union in Christ will be reaffirmed, and the record of their sins will be blotted out (Dan 7:22; Rev 3:5). The Christian apostasy, symbolized by the little horn (Dan 7-8) which has attacked the priestly ministry of Christ and substituted an altered form of worship—thus a form of idolatry (Dan 8:11–12; cf. 2 Thess 2:3–4)—and has shed innocent blood (Dan 7:25; Rev 17:5–6), has thereby illegally profaned the heavenly sanctuary (Dan 11:31) and will be cut off when the final judgment is concluded (Dan 7:26; 8:25).

Satan, now charged with accountability for sin as its originator and instigator, will be banished (like the ancient scapegoat) to the wilderness of a ruined earth during the millennial phase of the judgment (Rev 20:1–9; cf. 1 Cor 6:2–3). He will be destroyed together with all the impenitent in the fires that cleanse the earth at the close of the executive phase of the final judgment (Rev 20:10–15). God will be vindicated before the intelligent beings of His creation, and the redeemed will share in His eternal kingdom (Dan 7:13–14, 27; Rev 21:1–5; Matt 25:34).

Section Outline

- I. Introduction: Paradoxical Nature of Sacrifices
- II. Legal Transfer of Sin to the Sanctuary
- III. High Priest Robes and Double Washing
- IV. Three Great Periods of Atonement in Israel
- V. General Conclusions

Introduction: Paradoxical Nature of Sacrifices

As studies of Israelite worship continue it is becoming clearer that the sacrificial system had a paradoxical quality which must be understood in order to interpret its types correctly. While a current of sin and contamination came from the people toward the sanctuary, from the sanctuary there flowed toward the people a stream of purification and sanctification.¹

This Oriental logic, however, is not grasped easily by the Western mind, as can be seen in scholarly opinions on how to translate certain key words pertaining to the sacrifices.

For example, take the term haṭṭā't ("sin"). When used in terms of sacrifice (Lev 4; Num 19:9), it is translated by some as "sacrifice for sin," but by others as "sacrifice for purification," or simply "atonement." Another term is 'āšām ("guilt"). This term has been translated in the same context as "sacrifice for guilt" and as "sacrifice for reparation" (Lev 5). Something similar also occurs with the expression nāśā 'āwôn ("bear [carry] iniquity"). It is translated "to remove [take away] the iniquity" (Lev 10:17), or simply "pardon" (Exod 24:7). Finally, it may be noted that the term niddāh ("impurity") is likewise translated in two ways: "impurity [menstrual]" or "purification" (Num 19:9).

Always debating this matter in accordance with Western logic, there are authors who hold to one side of the problem and leave the other side without a solution. Or they may prefer to claim that theologically contradictory currents are reflected in the biblical text.¹¹ As an example of this one-sided approach the following argument may be noted: Inasmuch as the sin offering is stated to be "most holy" (Lev 6:25), it is not possible that the flesh of such a sacrifice would bear sin (cf. Lev 10:7).¹² In this manner some scholars have gone to extremes by saying that an object which enters in contact with holiness is "infected with holiness," and therefore, should be cleansed with water (cf. Lev 6:27–28; 16:24).¹³ But, as we will see, sanctity or holiness is never purified or removed by washing with water!

Contamination by Blood

How can blood appear to have both a defiling and a cleansing function? This is a paradox. One solution which has been suggested in an attempt to harmonize what appears to Westerners as a contradictory concept is as follows: the mystery may be "unravelled" by making a distinction between the different elements of the sacrifice. According to this opinion the blood would be the purifying element and the rest of the victim (flesh, etc.) would be the contaminating element. Elements.

This solution, however, is artificial. Furthermore, it cannot be maintained within the total context of the Israelite sacrifices, because contamination by blood is not differentiated from contamination by the flesh of the sacrificed animal (Lev 6:27–28; 16:24, 26). Another example of the blending of blood and flesh is the production of "the water for impurity" which was made from the ashes of a red heifer and was used for cleansing purposes in certain purification rituals (Num 19:9, 11–22). The blood, as well as the flesh, the skin, and the rest of the animal, including its excrements, formed a part of the ashes which were used to prepare the $nidd\bar{a}h$ ("impurity") water. Outside of this context (the production of this special water) $nidd\bar{a}h$ is always used in relation to impurity, especially with that of the woman's menstruation or other occasions when there was loss of blood such as at childbirth (Lev 12:2; 15:19, 24–26, 33, etc.). 16

It is evident that the ashes mixed in water could not avoid the association of the blood with impurity. Furthermore the red color of the cow is also meaningful. Its linkage in the popular mind with blood is attested in primitive cultures. Consequently, the *red* hide and the addition of the *crimson* yarn and *red* cedar strengthens the blood aspect of the ashes.¹⁷ At this point it is easy to recall the familiar passage of Isaiah 1:18, "Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall become like wool" (cf. Isa 63:2–3).

The rite for the purification of the leper was different from the sprinkling of the special water noted above, but several elements involved in the production of the ashes were also used, namely, blood, cedar wood, hyssop, crimson, and water (Lev 14:4–6, 49–50). The procedure also had certain parallelisms with the two he-goats used on the Day of Atonement. Although Leviticus 14:2–8 does not interpret explicitly the blood rite, its analogy with the scapegoat (Lev 16:20–22) is sufficiently clear to infer that the live bird was contaminated by the blood of the slain one. 19

To the above data may be added several expressions in which sin is placed in parallel relationship with *blood*. For example, "Your hands are defiled with *blood* and your fingers with *iniquity*" (Isa 59:3, emphasis added; cf. 1:15). Also such expressions as "his blood is upon him" (Lev 20:9, 11–13, 16, 27, etc.) give the dark side, so to speak, of this symbol. In these last expressions the term "blood" would carry the idea of "guilt" (cf. Josh 2:17, 19–20; Matt 27:25; Acts 5:28).

It is clear, therefore, that sacrificial blood cannot be seen exclusively as a purifying element. Actually, it would appear that in Hebrew thought the blood was viewed as having a dual function. It could contaminate and purify.

Substitutional Interchange

The paradox of the Israelite sacrifice may be explained as operating on the principle of substitutional interchange (cf. Isa 53:10—11).²⁰ The purity of the sacrificial animal was transmitted symbolically through the blood rites (or through the entire body as in the case of the ashes of the red heifer mixed with water) to the impure person. And the impurity of the one who was contaminated was transferred to the animal which in turn contaminated the sanctuary—the pure objects it touched, whether the contact was with its flesh or blood.

Thus, in the light of this principle it is not necessary to discuss whether $m\hat{e}$ $nidd\bar{a}h$ (literally, "waters of impurity") should be translated "impure water" or "water of purification." The context reveals the fact that for the Hebrew mind the word could be used with both meanings simultaneously. But what is still more interesting is that this $nidd\bar{a}h$ -water (because of its composition) is also viewed as a $ha! \bar{a}! \bar{a}!$

This principle of substitutional interchange can be seen also in the preliminary procedure to cleanse the leper which took place outside the camp/city. The leper transmitted his impurities to the sacrificed bird, but at the same time he received from the bird the purity which he needed when its blood mixed with water was sprinkled seven times over him (Lev 14:6–7; cf. 51–53). The living bird which was released, however, carried its impurity by contact with the same elements that had purified the leper.

Following the same principle of substitutional interchange we may observe that the sin offering (blood/flesh) contaminated all that it touched in the "holy place" of the sanctuary court thus requiring a sanctifying process by the indicated washings (Lev 6:25–29). The priest himself, being pure (cf. Lev 22:3–7), was required to eat the flesh of the sacrifice "in a holy place" and thereby take upon himself the sins of the people (Lev 10:17; Num 18:1; cf. Lev 7:7). Nevertheless the sacrifice was regarded as "most holy" (Lev 6:25, 29), separated for a very sacred purpose, for which reason those (the priests) who had contact with it must be sanctified before eating.

The ultimate result of this substitutional interchange was that the sinner (Lev 4:20-35) or the leper (Lev 14:13-14) was pardoned or purified while at the same time the sanctuary (sanctified at its inauguration) was contaminated (cf. Num 7:1; Lev 8:10-12; 16:16, 33).

This paradoxical principle of defilement//cleansing is again illustrated by the divine instructions regarding murder and the subsequent atonement required to cleanse the land. The spilled blood of the innocent person who was murdered is said to contaminate the earth. But the spilled blood of the murderer who is executed for his crime is viewed as cleansing the land (Num 35:33, kipper). In a similar manner the divine vengeance directed against the peoples who contaminated the earth is described as a "sacrifice" (Isa 34:6; Jer 46:10) which makes atonement or expiation (Deut 32:41–43 [vs. 43, kipper means expiation]).

Conclusion. The blood of the sacrifice for the sins of Israel did not have in itself a magic power for purification. Its purifying or contaminative value had to be measured according to the place and the circumstances in which it was applied. When it had to do with persons or things that were not consecrated, it purified them. On the contrary, when it was applied to sanctified persons or objects, it contaminated them.

During the year the blood was deposited in the place which God had sanctified with His glory—His sanctuary (Exod 29:43). In this manner sin was transferred to the sanctuary complex and contaminated it. At the end of the year, on the Day of Atonement, the paradox of the substitutional principle operated again, and the blood became the element for the purification of the sanctuary from all the sins which had contaminated it until that point. Then in the figurative ritual the sins were blotted out totally from Israel.

Legal Transfer of Sin to the Sanctuary

It has been demonstrated already in our analysis of the "illegal" or "direct" contamination of the sanctuary that sins worthy of death could be atoned for only by the death of the guilty person. We now move to investigate whether, from a positive perspective, there are additional evidences in the ritual laws themselves to indicate that the rites of the Day of Atonement purified the sanctuary from those sins which had been pardoned and transferred to it during the year.

Structural Evidences

The book of Leviticus. Practically all authors perceive two general categories of law in the book of Leviticus:

- 1. The ritual laws: of sacrifice (chaps. 1-10); of purification (chaps. 11-16).
- 2. The laws of holiness (chaps. 17-27). This classification is so evident that sometimes entire books have been written to deal exclusively with just one of these two sections.

In the first part of Leviticus (chaps. 1–16) the manner in which the problems of sin and of impurity may be resolved (without recourse to capital punishment) is determined positively. The incident of Nadab and Abihu is an exception (Lev 10). However, the incident did illustrate the need for faithful adherence to the ritual codes lest a similar disgrace be repeated (Lev 10:9–11; 16:1). Leviticus 15:31, the contextual antecedent closest to Leviticus 16, appears to serve a similar purpose. It does not establish the death sentence but serves a warning notice to prevent it.

Thus, the laws dealt with in the first 16 chapters present, for the most part, situations that are susceptible to being solved through sacrifice.

In the second part of the book (17–27), however, the laws deal in detail with capital punishment.²¹ The focus is not on the ritual means for avoiding death, but upon the death sentence itself. The warnings given make no appeal to the rituals as the means by which the guilty may make amends (Lev 20:4–5, 22–23; 18:26–30). For this reason the death sentence established for the Day of Atonement *for unpardonable sins* is located in the second section of Leviticus (Lev 23:29–30). But the Day of Atonement solution for cleansing the sanctuary *from pardoned sins* is recorded in Leviticus 16, in the first section of the book.

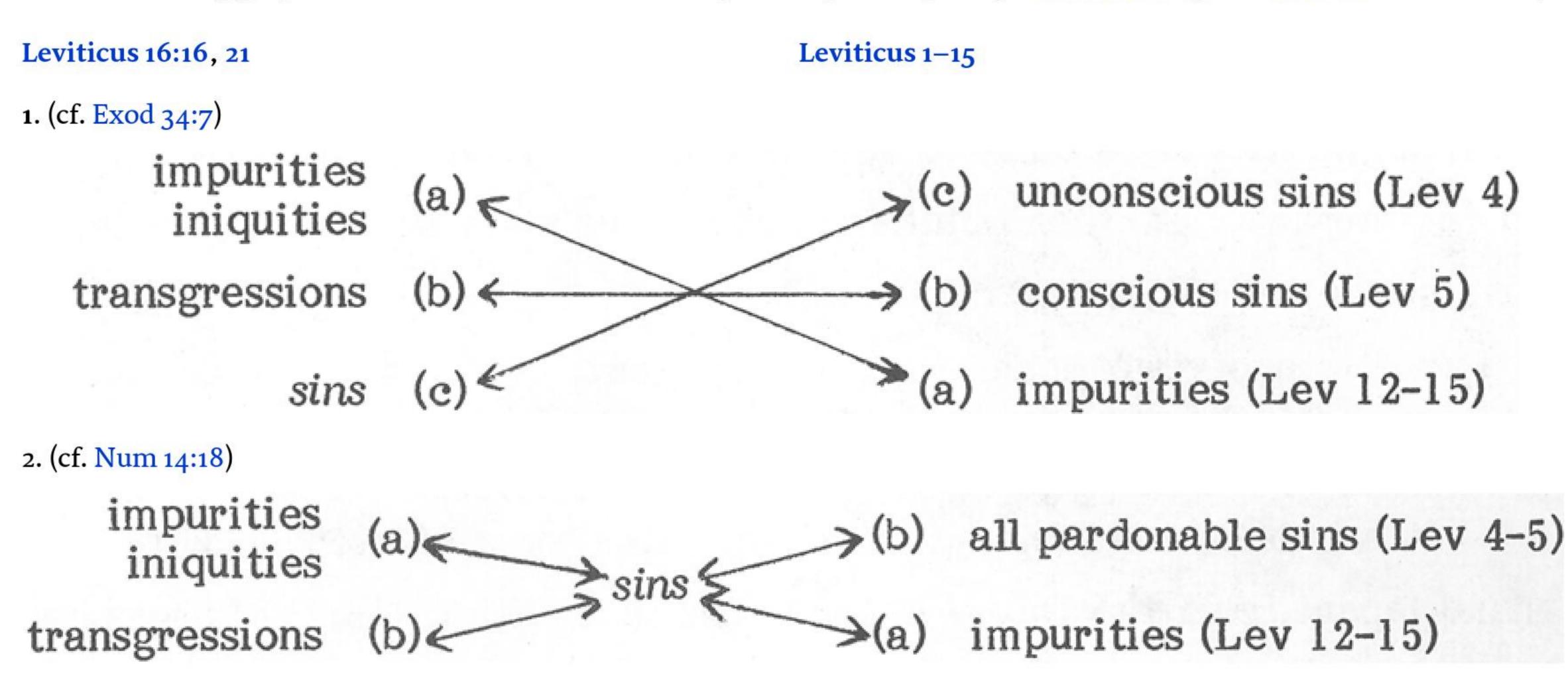
Inverted reference. Leviticus 16:16 may be translated literally as follows: "And he will purify [kipper] the sanctuary of the impurities [tum'āh] of the children of Israel and of their transgressions [peša']; from all their sins [haṭṭā't]." The text seems to emphasize that the purification of the Day of Atonement does not omit any of the sins of Israel (described in chapters 1–15) which had been pardoned during the year. Syntactic evidence may be presented to suggest that the two terms, "impurities" and "transgressions" (connected by the conjunction "and"), are summed up in the expression "all their sins." 122

In this connection we may compare verse 21 with verse 16. In verse 21 the statement is made that "Aaron shall ... confess over ... [the scapegoat] all the *iniquities* ['āwôn] ... all their *transgressions* [peša'], all their *sins* [ḥaṭṭā't]; ..." It will be seen in this second listing that the term "iniquities" has replaced the word "impurities." This is quite understandable if we take into consideration that the two terms are used synonymously in other passages of the book (cf. Leviticus 17:15–16 which notes that the person who chooses to remain unclean (impure) must bear his iniquity).²³

Whether we wish to see in Leviticus 16:16 the two principal terms ("impurities" and "transgressions") included in the expression "all their sins," or to see three separate words ("impurities," "transgressions," "sins") is not too important. It is the *order* in which these items are listed as compared with the sequence in which they were previously discussed in chapters 1–15 that is significent. The order is inverted; that is, the sequence is reversed.

It may be questioned as to what in Leviticus 1–15 would match with "transgressions" (peša'). It will be recalled that Leviticus 4–5 dealt with guilt offerings ('āšām). These offerings involved conscious, deliberate sins. It is not difficult, therefore, to see an allusion to the pardonable sins of this category in the term "transgressions" (peša') as listed in Leviticus 16:16, 21.

The following graph indicates the inverted relationships of the parallel passages Leviticus 1-15 and 16:16, 21 in the two ways the term "sins" may be construed (see examples 1 and 2):



This type of inverted structure occurs frequently in the Bible, a fact which reinforces the evidence presented here,²⁴ and leads to this conclusion: The writer's description of the purification of the sanctuary on the Day of Atonement (Lev 16) indicates that he had in mind only those sins and ritual errors discussed in the previous 15 chapters for which pardon had been granted through the prescribed procedures during the year.

Ritual Evidences (Substitution)

Up to this point we have not explained how sin was transferred to the sacrificial victim. This understanding is inferred from the imposition of the hand(s) of the penitent upon the head of the animal before it was slain. Since this point has been the subject of many discussions even to the present time, the head of the animal before it was slain. Since this point has been the subject of many discussions even to the present time, the head of the animal before it was slain. Since this point has been the subject of many discussions even to the present time, the head of the animal before it was slain. Since this point has been the subject of many discussions even to the present time, the head of the animal before it was slain. Since this point has been the subject of many discussions even to the present time, the head of the animal before it was slain. Since this point has been the subject of many discussions even to the present time, the head of the animal before it was slain. Since this point has been the subject of many discussions even to the present time, the head of the animal before it was slain.

Transferal by imposition of hands. Almost all sacrifices offered in the sanctuary ritual required the imposition of hands upon the head of the victim.²⁷ This has given rise to much discussion among Bible interpreters. It is thought that each class of sacrifice may have had a different motivation for the act. Another point for debate has been the alleged difference between the imposition of only one hand (the bulk of the sacrifices)²⁸ and the imposition of two hands in the scapegoat ritual.²⁹ Furthermore, the confession and consequent transmission of sin to the victim is stated explicitly only in the scapegoat ritual (Lev 16:21).³⁰

It has been suggested that if the ritual was carried on with only one hand (apart from the Day of Atonement in Leviticus 16:21), it was because the other hand was occupied with a knife to slay the victim.³¹ Thus, the imposition of two hands upon the scapegoat becomes a natural thing since the animal was not sacrificed.

Symbolism may have dictated this apparent distinction in form. For example, the imposition of only one hand upon the victim may have symbolized the transmission of one specific sin while the imposition of two hands may have corresponded to several sins or to a collective transferal. In the case of the scapegoat the priest placed his two hands upon the animal to transmit not an individual fault but rather the sins committed by the people during the year. This act had to do with a plurality of sins. Again, it was only one person who placed his two hands upon the scapegoat on the Day of Atonement—and this for the sins of all the people—while in Leviticus 4 it is only the sinner himself who sought forgiveness.

It has been suggested also that the imposition of only one hand served to express identification between the one who made the offering and the offered animal, whereas the imposition of the two hands served to express only the idea of transferal.³² The principle of identity, however, could be accepted without negating the idea of transferal. If so, by contrast, the high priest would use both hands so that he would not identify himself with the scapegoat, although the concept of transferal was evident.

There is, therefore, no real foundation for rejecting the idea of the transmission of sins through the sin offering because it was done apparently by one hand rather than two (cf. Num 27:18, 23). It may be that the confession and transmission of sins was stated carefully in the rite of the scapegoat in order to prevent giving rise to a wrong interpretation regarding the true role of this animal, charged with the sins of the people, but not sacrificed.

Probably it would be more accurate to interpret the imposition of hands according to the nature of each class of sacrifice. Thus the placement of the hand or hands was like a prayer with a definite purpose in mind. The prayer could be for the atonement of the life that was now being consecrated completely to Yahweh (Lev 1:4); the expression of specific thanks (Lev 3:1); the confession of a definite sin (Lev 4:2-3, 13-14, etc.; Num 5:6-7; etc.); a special ordination (Lev 8:22); or even more explicitly, the confession of the sins of Israel taken from the sanctuary and placed upon the Scapegoat on the Day of Atonement (Lev 16:20-22).

Silence in the text on the imposition of hands. The description of the Day of Atonement ritual (Lev 16) contains no statement regarding the imposition of hands upon the Lord's goat, the blood of which was used for cleansing the sanctuary complex. This omission has given rise to various explanations.³³

How much significance should be attached to the silence on this point in Leviticus 16? A survey of the chapters that touch on the sin and guilt offerings reveals the following situation: No mention of the imposition of hands is made in Leviticus 5–7 which deal with the guilt offering. Nevertheless it is stated that the law for the guilt offering is the same as the guideline for the sin offering (Lev 7:7). No reference is made to the matter in Leviticus 6:25–30 or in Leviticus 9. However, Leviticus 10:17 indicates that a transferal of sin was made through sin offerings. Reference to the imposition of hands is also omitted when the sin offering is referred to in Leviticus 12, 14, 15, and in Numbers 7, 15, 19, 28, 29.

The simplest explanation is that the Bible writer considered that his explanation was sufficiently clear concerning the imposition of hands in the first description made in Leviticus 4 about sin offerings. It was not necessary to repeat each time what was understood to be the procedure when sin and guilt offerings were made. Consequently the silence in subsequent chapters should not be overpressed.

The silence is broken once in Leviticus 8:14 where the writer describes the inaugural consecration of the priesthood. Perhaps it was to indicate that even in those rituals, which had nothing to do with specific sins, the imposition of hands also should be practiced. The same imposition of hands is noted in Numbers 8 at the unique ceremony for the consecration of the Levites (Num 8:10, 12).

If the silence with regard to the laying on of hands is significant in Leviticus 16, it may be inferred that it was because the Lord's goat does not serve as a transfer victim to bring sin into the sanctuary, but as a cleansing agent to remove sins from the sanctuary.

Conclusion. The imposition of hands taught Israel in a concrete manner that sin could not be settled in some general, indefinite manner. Rather, they were shown that the solution to their sin problem was exact and was of a penal character. The sinner had to choose between offering a substitute animal upon which he could place his sin or accepting sooner or later the deserved punishment himself. If he chose the route of substitution, his sin was transferred to the sanctuary. Eventually it was placed upon the live scapegoat and blotted out.

Comparative Etymological Evidences (Bearing of Sin and Its Eradication)

When the blood of the sin offering was not sprinkled in the interior of the sanctuary, the priest was to eat the flesh of the animal; thereby he was said to carry or to bear the iniquity $(n\bar{a} \pm \bar{a} \pm$

Some writers who do not understand the paradoxical system of Israelite worship find difficulty in translating this passage. The expression means literally "to carry or bear the iniquity." In such a context it should not be translated "to take away the iniquity," because no explanation is given in regard to its disposal. In this setting the expression "to bear iniquity" is parallel with the meaning "to be guilty" (Lev 5:1-3).

When $n\bar{a}s\bar{a}$ ' $\bar{a}w\hat{o}n$ is applied to the perpetrator of the sin, it always means that the responsibility for the evil has not yet been, or cannot be, removed from him. He is accountable.³⁵ When the expression is used in regard to one who has not sinned personally, it can mean that guilt has been removed from another and placed upon him as an intermediary or substitute. He bears iniquity for, or in behalf of, another (Exod 28:38; Lev 10:17). This was the case of the priests in Leviticus 10:17.

When the expression has to do with a request or with a confession of sin to God, it means that God Himself assumes the responsibility of the guilt, and the penitent is thereby freed from his sin. (See Exodus 34:7; Numbers 14:18. The expression, "forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin" literally reads, "bearing iniquity and transgression and sin" literally reads, "bearing iniquity and transgression and sin".)³⁶

Sometimes other words such as "transgression" (peša') or "sin" (haṭṭā't) are substituted for "iniquity" ('āwôn) in this expression (thus: to bear transgression or to bear sin). When the direct object of these expressions is the one who is attacked, it may mean simply that he accepts the consequences of the evil without taking vengeance. For example, Joseph who was sold into slavery by his brothers is asked to "forgive the transgression," literally, "to bear the transgression" (Gen 50:17). On the other hand the expression may be stated in such a manner as to imply punishment or vengeance. For example, Israel is warned against rebellion because the angel of the Lord "will not pardon your transgression" (literally, "he will not bear your rebellion," Exod 23:21; cf. Josh 24:19).

As has been observed already, both the blood and the flesh of the sin offering were "holy" (Lev 6:25, 29). They were the ritual means designed to take away the sins of the people. Through the manipulation of the blood and the eating of the flesh the sins of the penitent were transferred to the priesthood and the sanctuary.

But if a sacrifice was performed outside the sanctuary complex and apart from its system, its blood was charged upon the offerer as guilt in the same way guilt was charged to the murderer of innocent blood (Lev 17:4).³⁷ The reason for this relationship between the two kinds of blood shedding is evident. The individual who shed human blood could not atone for his crime by means of sacrificial blood (Num 35:33). Likewise, sacrificial blood—offered apart from the sanctuary—was not accepted as a substitute for the life of a man.

Actually, such a sacrifice was an act of apostasy (cf. Lev 17:7), an act indicating a lack of appreciation for the sanctuary of Yahweh which provided the only effective means for obtaining salvation, peace, and all other divine blessings. The blood of this improper sacrifice would have to be imputed to the one who sacrificed it, for the transferal of a substituted life could be done only in connection with the sanctuary and its ritual (cf. Lev 17:6, 11).

It was necessary that the blood of every sacrifice should thus reach the sanctuary, for it was there that the paradoxical interchange took place: the transfer of sin and impurity from the penitent to the sanctuary and his reception of forgiveness and cleansing in return. It could be said that the sanctuary was the center of the relationship between God and Israel, and only through its ministries could the penitent be accepted and his petitions heard.

At this point it is important to note that the sanctuary differed from the people (including its human priesthood) in this sense: it never had faults of its own for which it needed to be purified. The sanctuary assumed responsibility for the forgiven sins which were transferred to it. It was never itself the cause of those sins and impurities.

In a real sense, therefore, the sacrifice of the Lord's goat on the Day of Atonement was in favor of the sanctuary and was an act of vindication for it. In this manner the Day of Atonement was an affirmation of innocence so far as the sanctuary itself was concerned, because the sanctuary was in reality a representation of the throne and government of God. The One who took on the responsibility of all the sins that were deposited therein by sacrifice was the God who lived in it, and now He was being vindicated.

All sin is an offense to God. To contaminate the sanctuary (legally or illegally), was, in effect, to contaminate or to profane the name of Yahweh (Lev 20:3).³⁸ To the Hebrew mind the name of God represented His character, His attributes (Exod 34:5–7; Ps 111:9). Hence, to love or to fear God's name was to love the way He represented Himself (Isa 56:6). To praise and proclaim His name was to announce His character (Deut 32:3–4; Pss 113; 115:1). His name was linked to the temple (1 Kgs 8:16, 20; 9:3) and, by extension, to the city of Jerusalem and Zion, the holy mount (Isa 18:7; 1 Kgs 14:21; 2 Chr 6:5–6).

Contamination of the sanctuary, therefore, brought reproach to the Deity. By the purification of the sanctuary on the Day of Atonement, God made His name truly great (cf. Ps 138:2-3). It is not difficult, therefore, to perceive the theological background many passages have which speak of the purification of the people and of Jerusalem (Isa 4:2-6; Ezek 36:20-38; cf. Jer 50:20; etc.). Such purification redounded to God's honor and glory.

Conclusion. Due to the general atonement offered in the daily morning and evening burnt offering for the nation (Num 28:3–10; cf. Lev 1:4), the sins that were committed by the people as individuals were tolerated for a time (cf. Job 1:5).³⁹ The sinner, therefore, had opportunity to reflect on his course of life, to repent, and to bring his sacrifice for sin to the sanctuary.⁴⁰ If he did not do this, his sin could not be transferred to the sanctuary and God could not assume the responsibility of forgiving him. Such a sinner stood liable for his own sins and for the penalty which would have to fall upon him as in the case of unpardonable rebellion (Josh 24:19; cf. Exod 23:21).

However, when the sinner repented, God took upon Himself the fault for a certain time, until accountability fell upon its first cause: Azazel (according to the figure of the scapegoat). The assumption of the sins which God forgives is expressed clearly in the phrase: "Yahweh, Yahweh ... nōśē' 'āwôn wāpeša' w^eḥaṭṭā'āh [Yahweh, Yahweh ... who bears iniquity, rebellion, and sin]" (Exod 34:6–7; cf. Num 14:18; Ps 32:5; etc.).

The sins which God refuses to bear are referred to in the declaration that follows in the Exodus 34 passage: "but who will by no means clear the guilty" (vs. 7). Therefore, there are sins that God takes upon Himself—those that have been confessed in penitence—and others which He rejects—those never confessed by the sinner who spurns His mercy.

It is worth noting that the words appearing here in Exodus 34:7 in the singular number (iniquity, transgression, and sin) appear in the plural—and in the same sequence—(iniquities, transgressions, sins) in Leviticus 16:21, the Day of Atonement chapter. In the Exodus passage Yahweh is described as bearing patiently the responsibility of the sins of the people. In the Leviticus passage there is illustrated the way He discharges the accountability for them to the head of Azazel, the scapegoat.

High Priest Robes and Double Washing

Another characteristic of the Day of Atonement appears in the instructions concerning the high priest's double ablution. On this day he was to wash and put on the required garments in preparation for the special ceremonies (Lev 16:4). After the scapegoat ritual he was to remove his clothing and wash again, redressing this time in the customary, high priestly attire (Lev 16:23–24). This second washing has been a point of discussion even among the Jews themselves, some even questioning the location of the passage.⁴¹ No reason can be seen why washing should be performed after the ritual, especially since the high priest had only moments before appeared before God in the most holy place of the sanctuary.

Apparel of the high priest. It has been recognized generally that the apparel of the high priest was composed of eight pieces, four of which were worn by the other priests. However, the simple linen (bad) garments that the high priests wore for a portion of the time on the Day of Atonement (Lev 16:4) differed in quality from the "fine" linen (šēš) garments normally worn by him and his associates during the year (Exod 39:27–28).

These simple linen garments were used every day by the common priests—but only in connection with the removal of the ashes from the altar of burnt offering (Lev 6:9-11). In a similar manner the simple linen garments had a limited use by the high priest on the Day of Atonement (Lev 16:23-24). On that day he wore them, not to remove ashes, but to remove all the impurities deposited in the sanctuary through the medium of the sin offerings made during the year.

Several authors suggest that the linen garments used by the high priest on the Day of Atonement were a sign of mourning or of humiliation. However, the garments of the common priests were not unworthy, for they too had been manufactured "for glory and beauty" (Exod 28:40). A truer insight is afforded from the biblical use of linen. Heavenly beings and the saints are described in the visions of the prophets as dressed in linen (Ezek 9:2–3, 11; 10:2, 6–7; Rev 19:8; cf. 7:9, 13). The contexts suggest that the linen garment is a symbol of holiness and purity.⁴² Thus the high priest was looked upon by the people as a heavenly messenger.

The two sets of high priestly attire would seem to indicate the dual nature of the high priest's ministry inasmuch as he was called upon to represent God to man and man to God. On the Day of Atonement in certain aspects of the ritual the high priest would appear before Yahweh Himself, and, therefore, would represent—as a man—the people before the throne of God. This highlight of the ritual would seem to link with the prophetic description of the "son of man" in Daniel 7:13 who appears before the judgment throne upon which God is seated, portrayed as the "Ancient of Days."

Double washing of the high priest. No one seems to have any difficulty in understanding the reason for the high priest's first ablution before dressing in his linen robes on the Day of Atonement. Actually, the priests always washed their hands and feet before entering the sanctuary or before they offered sacrifices at the altar (Exod 30:18–21; 40:31–32). Anyone who entered into contact with sacred things was first to place himself in a state of holiness. But how do we explain the washing required after the scapegoat ritual?

Some authors think that both impurity and holiness were contagious and that the washing was required after the scapegoat rite in order to purify the priest who had been "infected with holiness"!⁴³ However, as we have commented earlier, holiness was never removed by washing.⁴⁴ On the contrary, it was obtained by washing (Exod 19:10, 14; Lev 11:44–45; cf. vs. 40; 22:6).

The simplest solution is to observe that the washing required in Leviticus 16:24 was really similar to the washings required of those who had become impure through handling sacrifices for sin (cf. Lev 6:27–28; 16:26–28; Num 19:7–10, 19–21). After having purified himself, the priesthood, and the sanctuary, the high priest would bear upon himself those sins taken from the sanctuary. In this manner he would be viewed as being lightly contaminated. His hands, still bloodstained, would be placed upon the head of the scapegoat. All the sins would be transferred in this way to the desert, blotted out completely from sanctuary and people. He would then go to the sanctuary and remove his linen robes, washing his body in the "separate place" of the court designed for this purpose.

This final ablution required of the high priest (and those who removed the scapegoat and the carcasses of the sacrifices) is an additional evidence indicating that the Day of Atonement brought to a conclusion the liturgical year in Israel.⁴⁶ Just as the calendar of feasts began with a sacrifice—the Passover—and a subsequent harvest feast (Lev 23:5–14), so also the liturgical year closed with this special type of sacrifice on the Day of Atonement and a subsequent final harvest feast—Feast of Tabernacles (Lev 23:27–43).

The second washing of the high priest, together with the washing of those who had handled the animals after having been purified, indicated that all Israel was now clean. No one bore the impurity of anyone. The sins and the impurities had been blotted out. The sanctuary and the camp/nation stood clean before God. Hence, a simple washing of those who had touched the sacrifices after having been purified was sufficient to free themselves of this kind of impurity.⁴⁷

Three Great Periods of Atonement in Israel

A chart which sketches the essential sin offering rites in connection with the sanctuary may help to clarify some important points for us. At the same time it will offer the necessary data to correct the idea some Christians hold that the typical rites of the Day of Atonement were completely fulfilled in the death of Christ. The texts of the NT which apply the typology of the earthly sanctuary to the ministry of Christ in the heavenly sanctuary really do not give a basis for such a conclusion.⁴⁸

BULL/GOAT SACRIFICES FOR SIN

| 122 | Rites | Animals | What Was Done With Body | What Was Done With Blood |
|-----|----------------------------------------------------------------------|---------|----------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1. | Inaugurations of the Sanctuary | Bulls | Burned outside the camp. Fat upon the | |
| | (Exod 29; Lev 8–9; Num 7; 2 Chr 29:21, 24; Ezra 6:17; Ezek 43:18–27) | | altar. | altar. |
| | | Goats | Eaten by the priesthood (Lev 10:17). Fat upon the altar. | Placed upon the outer altar and spilled at its foot. Purification of the people. |
| 2 | During the Year | Bulls | Burned outside the camp. Fat upon the | Sprinkled seven times toward the veil. Placed upon the inner altar; spilled at the foot of the outer altar. Purifica- |
| • | (Lev 4; 6:24-30) | | altar. | tion of the priesthood and of the congregation. |
| | | Goats | Eaten by the priesthood. Fat upon the altar. | Placed upon the outer altar and spilled at its foot. Purification of the people. |
| 3 | Day of Atonement. Closing ritual | Bull | Burned outside the camp. Fat upon the | Sprinkled upon the ark and the two altars (seven times in each place). Purification of the priesthood. |
| •. | (Lev 16) | | altar. | |
| | | Goat | Burned outside the camp. Fat upon the altar. | Sprinkled upon the ark and the two altars (seven times in each place). Purification of the sanctuary and people. |

The above general summarization indicates that the only blood rites conducted within the holy places of the sanctuary were those relating to sin offerings for the priests or the congregation as a whole (during the year) and the special Day of Atonement rites. The inaugural rites which initially consecrated the sanctuary or reconsecrated it (as in the times of Hezekiah and Ezra) simply opened the gates, as it were, to the interior of the sanctuary, but no blood was taken within.

In contrast with the inaugural rites the Day of Atonement ceremonies show a movement that begins with the outer altar and moves to the interior of the sanctuary (Lev 16:11–13). With the aspersions of blood in the sanctuary the movement is reversed through the two apartments back to the exterior altar (Lev 16:16–20, 33). Only the inaugural rites and the final aspects of the Day of Atonement rites purified the outer altar of the sanctuary. It is further evident from our summarization that the only ones benefited by the sin offering blood rites made during the year were the penitent priests and people.

When the sanctuary was inaugurated the outer altar was not sprinkled seven times. But atonement was made for it in connection with the inaugural consecration of the priesthood for seven days which required daily sacrifices. In this case we see that the term "atonement" was not simply restricted to rites of blood, but involved a whole series of acts and sacrifices which qualified the priests as well as dedicated the sanctuary complex. 49

During the year whenever the blood was ministered in the holy place, it was sprinkled there seven times. The pardon which was thereby secured for the priests (or at times for the whole congregation) was complete. The Day of Atonement only vindicated the innocence of the priesthood and of the people from sins already pardoned. The very fact that the blood rites were never performed in the interior places when the sanctuary service was inaugurated (or reestablished after a period of apostasy) proves that the Day of Atonement blood rites dealt only with pardoned sins which had been transferred to the interior by sacrifice during the year.

When the priest ate the sacrifice for the sins of the people, it was not necessary for the sacrificial blood to be sprinkled seven times within the sanctuary. By the act of eating, the responsibility for the confessed faults passed directly to the priesthood. "You shall bear iniquity in connection with the sanctuary" (Num 18:1), the Lord had stated. It must be remembered that the priesthood was an integral part of the sanctuary. Whatever affected the priesthood affected the sanctuary too.

For example, the inaugural consecration of the priests at the same time purified the outer altar (Exod 29:35-37; Lev 8:14-15). The high priest was anointed when the sanctuary was anointed (Lev 8:10-15), and his desecration profaned it (Lev 21:12). Thus, sin was transferred by means of the priesthood to the holy place where the priests appeared during the year to intercede for the people before God. Although the people were forgiven and purified during the year, they waited (in confidence, for the sanctuary had assumed their guilt) until the Day of Atonement to obtain their definitive vindication.

On the Day of Atonement the high priest purified the priesthood from the "iniquity of the sanctuary" which they bore (Num 18:1a, KJV; cf. Lev 16:3, 6, 33). Immediately after the blood rite for the high priest and the priesthood in general, the high priest proceded to purify the sanctuary and people from all the impurities and sins resting in the sanctuary by means of the blood of the Lord's goat.

As in the inaugural rites, so in the Day of Atonement closing rites: the priesthood and the sanctuary were purified at the same time, suggesting that the Day of Atonement was intended to be understood as the closing rite of the sacrificial year. This point is underscored further in the number of sprinklings and the final direction the rituals took (from the most holy place back to the outer altar). Actually, this was the only time when the most holy place (Lev 16:15, 20a), the holy place (Lev 16:16b, 20b; cf. Exod 30:10), and the outer altar (Lev 16:18–20c) were sprinkled with blood seven times in each place. The outer altar was the last object of the sanctuary to be purified from the sins committed and confessed during the year. In this manner the sanctuary was reconsecrated for the new ritual year.

With this picture in mind we are better prepared to go to the NT and discover the more precise typological applications made there. Especially in the Epistle to the Hebrews we may see a double movement into and out of the heavenly sanctuary as Christ accomplishes the atonement processes. After having made the inaugural purification by His sacrifice in the outer court (the earth), Christ moves to the interior of the heavenly sanctuary (Heb 1:3; 10:12; 8:1–2). There He ministers the benefits of His atoning sacrifice in favor of the people in correspondence to the work of the earthly priests in the first apartment (Heb 2:17–18; 7:25). After He has purified the heavenly sanctuary in the second phase of His ministry which corresponds with the work of the high priest in the second apartment (Heb 9:23), He will appear "not to deal with sin," but to vindicate and to save His people who wait outside the sanctuary for Him (Heb 9:28).

General Conclusions

One of the basic reasons why modern authors have difficulty in understanding the Israelite system of sacrifice is because they analyze it with Western logic. But the Levitical worship can be appreciated only by recognizing the presence of Eastern thought patterns. In this case, the sanctuary system presents a paradoxical concept, namely, that sacrificial blood was viewed as having simultaneously both a defiling//cleansing function. This paradox we have chosen to call the principle of substitutional interchange. Through the manipulation of sacrificial blood the sins and impurities moved from the penitent to the sanctuary and thereby legally contaminated it; but at the same time the atoning and cleansing function of the sacrificial blood was directed toward the penitent, and he was forgiven and purified.

Another cause for misunderstanding is that in the NT special emphasis is placed upon the cleansing, purifying value of the blood of Christ when applied to the sinner. The problem comes when this NT fact is related directly to the OT sacrifices in a one-sided manner, unaware of the paradoxical, dual function of blood in the sanctuary system. In this instance it would seem wiser to move first from the type to the reality rather than from the reality to the type. Such a procedure would avoid misinterpreting the NT data about Christ and would enable us to better understand the full significance of what Christ accomplished in our behalf.

The Day of Atonement dealt with both pardoned and unpardoned sins. However, both classes of sins were not included in the purification of the sanctuary as described in Leviticus 16. Rather, various analyses, made from several angles, clearly confirm the fact that the Day of Atonement rites purified the sanctuary only from formerly pardoned sins. The Day of Atonement treatment of those persons who had not repented is discussed in a later chapter (Lev 23). Such persons were cut off from the congregation of Israel.

Thus it may be said that the sins which God did not bear—because they were not transferred to the sanctuary by sacrifice—fell back upon the guilty to their eternal perdition. The sins which God had accepted to bear upon Himself in the figure of the sanctuary (because in penitence they had been transferred to the sanctuary during the year) now on the Day of Atonement finally fall upon their prime source—Azazel, the scapegoat.

We identify Azazel as Satan, the originator and instigator of sin. All the accusations that the devil has launched against God and against His people fall back upon him. Actually, there remains no one else responsible and accountable for the sins of a people totally forgiven and purified. His definite expulsion from the community of the elect—both in symbol and in reality—was and will be justified completely.

It may be seen from our study, therefore, that the Day of Atonement was a day of vindication of God and of His people. In this sense, such prophecies as the preadvent judgment in the parallel passages of Daniel 7–8 are an exact replica of the rites of the Day of Atonement.

In many eschatological passages, in both Testaments, we find the theme that God's justice is vindicated either by the forgiveness of the penitent or by the condemnation to death of the guilty. It becomes clear, therefore, that the divine honor and sanctity—questioned since the appearance of sin—will be reestablished fully when the phases of final judgment are accomplished. Either God is able to end sin and rebellion (the decisive battle was already gained at the cross) or His reputation as a holy God, just and true, will be lost before the universe. But the moment will come when the great hosts redeemed by the blood of the Lamb will sing:

"Great and wonderful are thy deeds,
O Lord God the Almighty!
Just and true are thy ways,
O King of the ages!
Who shall not fear and glorify thy name, O Lord?
For thou alone art holy.
All nations shall come and worship thee,
for thy judgments have been revealed" (Rev 15:3-4).

GENERAL STUDIES

Prophecy: Issue of Conditionality
Prophecy: Single/Multiple Fulfillments?
Theological Significance of Preadvent Judgment
Justification and Judgment

CHAPTER VIII

Conditionality in Biblical Prophecy With Particular Reference to Apocalyptic

William G. Johnsson

Editorial synopsis. Seventh-day Adventists always have believed that a principle of conditionality operated in that kind of Bible prophecy which expected human response. On the other hand they regard the grand prophecies of Daniel and Revelation, depicting the struggle between good and evil and the ultimate victory and establishment of God's eternal kingdom, as revelations of His foreknowledge and an evidence of His sovereignty.

In recent years, however, it has been argued by some that *all* prophecy—including not only general prophecy as it appears in the major and minor prophets but also the apocalyptic prophecies of Daniel and Revelation—should be regarded as conditional prophecy. That is, it is suggested that the possible fulfillment of any prophecy in its primary intent was conditional on the obedience of God's people. Such a position, were it to be proved valid, would affect radically Adventist interpretation of the prophecies of Daniel and Revelation.

The author of this chapter analyzes a variety of prophecies in both Testaments. He concludes that although conditionality is a valid principle of interpretation, it cannot be used indiscriminately. The evidence from Scripture is clear that all Bible prophecies are *not* conditional.

Most predictions which have been viewed in the past by Seventh-day Adventists as conditional on Israel's obedience are not prophecies at all in the real sense of the term. They are based on the *known* promises and judgments (blessings/curses) which naturally arise out of the covenant relationship God formed with Israel. Conditionality is built into the promises and threatenings of the covenant; hence, it is misleading to extend this term and perspective to non-covenantal predictions. When this body of *covenant* "prophecies" are separated from the whole, it is noted that conditionality plays a minor role in the remaining kinds of prophecy.

For example, the prophecies of the Saviour's first and second advents are predicated on the divine intervention in history as God asserts His sovereignty to work out His eternal purpose. No failure on Israel's part could have prevented the first advent of the Messiah at the specified time God determined.

Some kinds of apocalyptic prophecy which emphasize the covenant setting with Israel (such as appear in Zechariah) may have a conditional element because of that fact. However, it is evident that the grand sweep of the apocalyptic prophecies of Daniel and Revelation transcend Israel. They often involve the nations of the world as a whole and have a cosmic, heavenly dimension as well. Such prophetic revelations are not conditional on human response. Rather, they disclose the divine sovereignty and foreknowledge of the Creator, revealing for the encouragement of His people the shape of things to come and the assurance of the ultimate victorious establishment of the eternal kingdom of righteousness.

Chapter Outline

- I. Introduction
- II. Significance of the Topic
- III. Conditional Prophecy in Recent Adventist Writings
- IV. Classification of Biblical Prophecies
- V. Conditionality and Apocalyptic
- VI. Theological Aspects Affecting Interpretation
- VII. Conclusions

Introduction

In the OT we read of a reluctant prophet who was sent to preach to the city of Nineveh. After a series of misadventures he arrived at the gate of the city and began to proclaim the message of doom with which Yahweh had commissioned him: "Yet 40 days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown!" (Jonah 3:4).

The words of the prophet were unequivocal: the destruction of the city was announced without qualification. But 40 days passed and Nineveh still stood. What happened? Was Jonah a false prophet? Did the prophecy fail? The fact that Nineveh later did come to its end does not relieve the problem, since the message of doom was linked to the 40-day period.

When we look closer at this story, additional facets begin to appear. First, it emerges that Jonah himself had doubts about the fulfillment of his prediction. Jonah 4:2 is important: "And he prayed to the Lord and said, 'I pray thee, Lord, is not this what I said when I was yet in my country? That is why I made haste to flee to Tarshish; for I knew that thou art a gracious God and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love, and repentest of evil.'"

This verse gives us the reason for Jonah's abortive flight in the boat to Tarshish and his subsequent petulant behavior as he sat in the booth waiting to see if Nineveh would be destroyed. That is, Jonah's knowledge of the character of Yahweh—that He is gracious, merciful, and forgiving—had led him to assume the possibility of a reprieve, even though the message Yahweh had given him seemed unrelenting.

A second clue is found in the reaction of the Ninevites to Jonah's preaching. Instead of fleeing from the apparently doomed city, they repented. They, too, based their hope in the character of Yahweh: "Who knows, God may yet repent and turn from his fierce anger, so that we perish not?" (Jonah 3:9).

The book of Jonah, therefore, seems to provide us with a clear example of conditional prophecy. Nor does it stand alone among the data of biblical prophecy:

- 1. Isaiah 1:19—"'If you are willing and obedient, you shall eat the good of the land.'"
- 2. Isaiah 38:1-22—The revoking of the pronouncement of Hezekiah's imminent death.
- 3. Jeremiah 18:7-10—"If at any time I declare concerning a nation or a kingdom, that I will pluck up and break down and destroy it, and if that nation, concerning which I have spoken, turns from its evil, I will repent of the evil that I intended to do to it. And if at any time I declare concerning a nation or a kingdom that I will build and plant it, and if it does evil in my sight, not listening to my voice, then I will repent of the good which I had intended to do to it."
 - 4. The prophets'—"Who knows if ..." or "perhaps" attached to warnings of impending disaster (for example, 2 Sam 12:22; Zeph 2:3; Exod 32:30).
 - 5. Luke 19:42—" 'Would that even today you knew the things that make for peace! But now they are hid from your eyes.'"

Further, some Adventists have seen in Ellen White's writings support for a conditionality principle in biblical prophecy as they have underscored her statement from MS 4, 1883: "The promises and threatenings of God are alike conditional." (See Selected Messages, book 1, page 67.)

On the face of the evidence, then, the Bible shows support for the idea of the conditionality of prophecy. But such recognition in turn introduces new—and weighty—questions: Is the Jonah example typical or atypical of biblical prophecy? Can God's word be trusted to mean what it appears to say? Does God in fact know what will happen? If prophecy is conditional, does divine sovereignty retain significant content?

Before examining the data, we will set out the scope of this paper, advancing working definitions and identifying the critical questions calling for resolution.

It is not our intention to take up principles of biblical interpretation in general or of prophetic literature in particular. Nor shall we canvass the areas of the nature of prophety and prophetism or the history of prophetic interpretation. Rather, we shall zero in on one aspect of prophetic interpretation—conditional prophecy. This subject, frequently mentioned, has not been dealt with in depth heretofore. We are concerned to sharpen our precision in the use of the term, to become more discriminating in classifying prophecy as conditional, to better understand the nature of such prophecy, and so to become more accurate in its interpretation.

In this paper we shall adopt the following working definitions:

By prophecy we mean "prediction." We recognize that biblical prophecy is a broad term, with prediction but one of its elements; however, for the purposes of this paper we are focusing on that predictive element.

By conditional prophecy we designate those biblical predictions whose fulfillment is dependent on the action or reaction of human beings.

Correspondingly, by unconditional prophecy we signify biblical predictions whose fulfillment is independent of the action or reaction of human beings.

The principal issues that confront us in this paper are as follows:

| 1. Is all prophecy conditional? |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| |
| 2. If not, what elements may be identified as characterizing conditional prophecy? |
| |
| 3. Does conditionality contradict divine foreknowledge and sovereignty? |
| |
| 4. Does apocalyptic modify conditionality? |
| |
| 5. What theological factors impinge on an understanding of conditional prophecy? |
| |
| 6. Does conditional prophecy call for its own unique scheme of interpretation? |
| |

Although we shall make some reference to the writings of Ellen White, the concern of the paper is with the biblical data.

We will proceed in five steps. First, we shall indicate the significance of the subject, particularly within an Adventist and contemporary context. Second, we shall briefly review and critique recent Adventist writings dealing with the subject. Third, we shall examine biblical predictions in an endeavor to classify them and hence provide greater clarity and understanding concerning the nature of conditional prophecy. Fourth, we shall give specific consideration of conditionality with regard to biblical apocalyptic. Fifth, we shall briefly reflect on the theological factors that impinge on the subject. Thus, the final stage will lead us into conclusions that seem justified on the basis of the data.

Significance of the Topic

Assuming that the Bible contains conditional prophecy, its interpretation will be important to every Christian who takes the Scriptures seriously and seeks to be guided by their messages. The issue of conditional prophecy is one that is of unusual significance to Seventh-day Adventists, however.

Adventists, as indicated by our very name, are deeply concerned with eschatology (final events in human history). We believe God has raised up this people to proclaim the imminent return of our Lord. Accordingly, from the days of our pioneers we have been alert to "the signs of the times," since events in the world around us may be understood from Bible prophecy to be harbingers of the second advent.

During the nineteenth century Adventists and their message were like a voice in the wilderness. More and more, however, we have been joined by evangelical Christians proclaiming the end of all things.¹ But we differ from them in our understanding of the scenario leading up to the second coming and even of the event itself. In particular, the role of literal Israel is perceived quite differently. At the heart of the dichotomy in interpretations lies the question of conditional prophecy.

Within a uniquely Seventh-day Adventist context, conditionality is also of contemporary importance. At issue is the historic Adventist interpretations of the time prophecies of Daniel and Revelation—the 2,300 days, the 1,260 days and the 70 weeks. Instead of understanding each of these periods as having fixed commencement and closing points, as they mark off long periods in history according to the divine unfolding of events, it is argued by some that they may be seen as coming under the umbrella of complete conditionality. This stance renders these prophecies amenable to multiple fulfillments or no fulfillment if the alleged conditions are not met. Specifically, the date 1844 and its role in salvation-history are understood in a manner quite distinct from the views of Adventist pioneers.²

That the topic of conditional prophecy is of more than passing interest to Adventists was underscored by the deliberations of the Sanctuary Review Committee at Glacier View, Colorado. Several questions listed for discussion by the delegates, in fact, centered in this issue. The consensus statement that emerged from the gathering, "Christ in the Heavenly Sanctuary," also called for ongoing study of this specific topic.³

Conditional Prophecy in Recent Adventist Writings

The 1974 North American Bible Conferences briefly touched on the subject of conditional prophecy in four of its presentations. It was affirmed that Adventists always had held to the principle of conditional prophecy. Furthermore, it was observed that the conditionality principle had protected the church from gauging the nearness of the End on the basis of events that affected the recently established nation of Israel. However, none of the expositions actually explored the biblical evidence for defining the nature and function of conditional prophecy.

Probably the most thorough attempt by Adventists to explain the nature of conditional prophecy is the article, "The Role of Israel in Old Testament Prophecy," in the Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary. This unsigned essay sets out to interpret the divine promises made to ancient Israel by the prophets and boldly states, "It is an undeniable historical fact that, to this day, the majority of these predictions have not been fulfilled."

The Commentary explanation is wholly in terms of conditionality. Rejecting other schools of thought, it states: "Seventh-day Adventists believe that, generally speaking, the promises and predictions given through the Old Testament prophets originally applied to literal Israel and were to have been fulfilled to them on the condition that they obey God and remain loyal to Him. But the Scriptures record the fact that they disobeyed God and proved disloyal to Him instead. Accordingly, what He purposed to do for the world through Israel of old He will finally accomplish through His church on earth today, and many of the promises originally made to Israel will be fulfilled to His remnant people at the close of time."

The body of the article develops the five ideas of this principle: Israel as God's chosen people, the ideal—how the plan was to operate, Israel's failure to carry out God's plan, why Israel failed, and spiritual Israel as the replacement of literal Israel. As a conclusion, the article sets out rules for approaching the study of OT prophetic passages. Four suggestions are given: the prophecy is to be examined in its entirety that its meaning to the people of its own time may be determined; conditional aspects of the prediction should be ascertained; the application of the prophecy made by later inspired writers must be observed; and the significance of the passage—its message for today—is to be sought.

By far the most fascinating aspect of this article is its portrayal of the "what-might-have-been." It pictures an obedient nation of Israel, even after the Exile, the focus of the world's attention. This nation prepares the whole world for the coming of the Messiah. Messiah comes, dies, rises again, with Jerusalem as a great missionary center to set the earth "ablaze with the light of truth in one grand, final appeal to those who had not as yet accepted the invitation of divine mercy." After the final call, those who refused allegiance to God would unite in efforts to take Jerusalem but God would wipe them out, leaving a world of obedient subjects of Yahweh.

There is no Second Coming in this scenario. There is no millennial period or new Jerusalem. The envisaged time span is short: the first advent is soon followed by the establishment of Messiah's eternal kingdom. This portrayal of the future—the "might-have-been"—forms the thrust of the entire article. It is the result of the rigorous application of the conditionality principle.

It comes as a shock to the reader, then, to find at the very close of the article an insertion of an explanatory sentence enclosed in parentheses to the effect that some prophecies may apply exclusively to our own day. The sentence, standing in direct contrast to the thesis of the essay, states, "This rule does not apply to the portions of the book of Daniel that the prophet was bidden to 'shut up' and 'seal,' or to other passages whose application Inspiration may have limited exclusively to our own time." Apparently the conditionality principle has to be modified at some point!

Indeed, the major criticism to be raised against the article is that it has oversimplified the interpretation of prophecy. Its hermeneutic is too wooden, too speculative. It takes a valid idea but has pressed it to the point where the thesis no longer becomes tenable.

Several other articles in the Commentary deserve brief mention. In "History of the Interpretation of Daniel" the conditionality principle does not figure prominently. In conflict with the thesis of the former article, we read "of the determining hand of God in history and His control of world affairs," of the "timetable of the centuries." The "sealed" portion of Daniel concerns the "last days," and 1260 actual years in the Christian era are prophesied in Daniel 7.13

The comments on Deuteronomy 18:15¹⁴ suggest four classes of prediction: relating to the immediate historical situation, exclusively to the Messiah, to the remote future (the Christian era), or having dual application. This discussion also touches on the matter of God's foreknowledge. The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Dictionary article on "prophet" gives general suggestions for interpreting Bible prophecy.

A document prepared more recently for consideration by the Sanctuary Review Committee (1980) demonstrates a thoroughgoing application of the conditionality idea to all Bible prophecy.¹⁶ Although the study involves several hermeneutical foci, conditionality plays a major role. It builds on the SDA Bible Commentary article on the role of Israel in OT prophecy but does not back off—as the Commentary article does—from the book of Daniel. Old Testament and NT, general prophecy and apocalyptic, 2,300 days and the Second Coming—all predictions are treated consistently under the rubric of conditionality.

It is not our purpose to embark on an extended critique of this document. We may observe that the work does have the merits of a rigorous consistency, at least in application of conditionality as a hermeneutical key to interpreting biblical prophecy. In our study here, however, we have to ask the question that the study does not—whether conditionality can be raised to such prominence, whether, in fact, it can bear the weight of the biblical data.

We close our brief survey of recent Adventist writing pertinent to our subject by extracting a statement from another paper prepared for the Sanctuary Review Committee (1980).¹⁷ "It is essential that we do not force upon apocalyptic [prophecy] the dual-fulfillment, two-foci model that applies to various prophecies in the general-prophecy category."¹⁸ General prophecy (sometimes designated as classical prophecy) is concerned primarily with the prophet's own time and occasionally with the end-time. On the other hand apocalyptic prophecy sees history as a continuum culminating in the final events of earth. Although the paper just cited does not address conditional prophecy specifically, the distinction drawn between these two kinds of prophecy is important for establishing a sound hermeneutic for interpreting apocalyptic prophecy.

Several conclusions emerge from our study of Adventist literature on the interpretation of Bible prophecy:

- 1. Conditionality as a principle for interpreting biblical prophecy is basic to Adventist hermeneutics.
- 2. This principle in fact sets us apart from other Christians in the interpretation of Bible prophecy.
- 3. While Adventists assume conditionality in their hermeneutics, there has been no fully satisfactory elaboration of the principle.
- 4. The attempt to apply rigorously the conditionality principle as the key to Bible prophecy runs into difficulties.
- 5. The relationship of conditionality to God's sovereignty and foreknowledge has not been worked through.
- 6. The impact of the type of prophecy—general or apocalyptic—on conditionality has not been taken up.
- With these previous Adventist discussions as background, we may pursue our task more intelligently. We are now ready for a more precise understanding of conditional prophecy.

Classification of Biblical Prophecies

In an attempt to clarify our understanding of conditional prophecy, we first need to classify biblical apocalyptic, we may, I think, discern at least four groups or categories:

Predictions to Israel That Arise Out of a Covenant Context

Probably the large majority of predictions that fall under general prophecy belong here. The eighth-and seventh-century B.C. prophets rebuke the people of Israel for their sins, calling them back to Yahweh, warning them of impending doom because of their unfaithfulness to the covenant.

The first chapter of Isaiah provides a classic illustration. Israel is arraigned before God, who calls heaven and earth to witness (vs. 2). Yahweh's complaint is that His people are guilty of gross stupidity. Although He has nurtured them tenderly, they do not display even the elemental gratitude of an ox or an ass (vss. 2–3). Their failure to live within the covenant is demonstrated by their unethical practices (vss. 4, 15, 17, 21–23) and religious observances that are merely formal (vss. 11–14). Because of Israel's sins the land has been devastated (vss. 5–9), as Yahweh has punished national transgression. Yet He has not cast them off utterly. He has left a remnant (vs. 9). Now He calls them back to the covenant: "Come now, and let us reason together, ..." (vs. 18). Because Yahweh is a covenant-keeping God, One who remains faithful despite mankind's unfaithfulness, because His lovingkindness (hesed) is at the heart of the covenant, there is hope for Israel—forgiveness and restoration (vss. 25–27).

Israel's history through the OT thus exhibits an oscillatory pattern. Prosperity, apostasy, decline, repentance, restoration—this is the cycle we find in Judges, Kings, and Chronicles. The principle governing the pattern is, "If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land: But if ye refuse and rebel, ye shall be devoured with the sword: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it" (Isa 1:19—20, KJV).

It is therefore possible to view Israel's history in its various fortunes as a reflection of the truth of Deuteronomy 28. This passage sets out the two ways that lie before the young nation. If the people will "hearken diligently unto the voice of the Lord thy God, to observe and to do all his commandments," they will be blessed richly—materially, nationally, spiritually (vss. 1–14, KJV). If, however, they are unfaithful to the covenant provisions, terrible curses will come upon them, until Israel is a byword among the nations (vss. 15–68).

Over and over again the prophets speak to a sinful nation in terms of these blessings and curses. Are their words, however, to be considered predictive prophecy?

That the element of conditionality is present is self-evident: the people's response determines the outcome. That the words are "prophecy," in the sense of a message from Yahweh, is also true—the prophets are conscious of a divine impelling. But we should not consider such messages *predictive* prophecy in the sense of disclosing a future otherwise unknown. Rather, they are applying the "law" of the covenant, something as fixed as Yahweh Himself.

The element of prediction here is no stronger than in a NT parallel: "He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God" (John 3:18, KJV). We are dealing with certainties, with the very plan of God for mankind. It is laid down by Him and cannot be negotiated.

I therefore suggest that we should regard predictions in this first class as *covenant promises or threats* rather than as "conditional prophecy." To do so will clear the ground immediately for more accurate understanding of those prophecies that truly unveil the future. Furthermore, it will remove from the OT a large section of what has been designated "unfulfilled prophecy."

Short-term Predictions

There are many short-term OT predictions which do not come within the promises/threats of the covenant relationship. They involve surrounding nations and, in some cases, individuals.

Although Yahweh has entered into covenant relation with one nation—Israel—He is nonetheless Lord of the world. He does not condemn wickedness among His special people only to wink at it among the surrounding nations. Therefore, they too come under judgment (for example, Isa 13–23; Jer 46–51; Ezek 25–32; Amos 1–2). The predictions concerning Israel's neighbors are not as clearcut in interpretation as the covenant promises/threats to Israel, however. We must now consider conditionality in tension with divine sovereignty.

The Jonah case provides the sharpest example of conditionality, as we already have seen. The change in the people leads to a change in the divine plan (3:9). The final verse of the book underscores the character of Yahweh which ensures both justice and mercy in all His dealings. "And should not I spare Nineveh, that great city, wherein are more than sixscore thousand persons that cannot discern between their right hand and their left hand; and also much cattle?" (4:11, KJV).

Yahweh does not destroy capriciously. Although Israel's neighbors are outside the covenant, the God of all the earth will deal justly in whatever He brings upon them. We may be sure then when a nation goes down to ruin, it is ultimately because of its gross wickedness.²⁰

The example of Nineveh is not typical of the prophecies concerning the nations, however. From Isaiah to Malachi there is no other instance of a prophet's being sent to deliver in person the word of doom.²¹ How the nations heard the divine threatenings (perhaps through ambassadors at times; cf. Isa 21; Jer 27) or if they always heard, we are not told. The manner in which we find these dire predictions is often in the setting of *divine certainty*: Yahweh has determined that retribution cannot be delayed.

Consider two striking examples from Isaiah's predictions about the nations. In chapter 10 we meet the dramatic "O Assyrian, the rod of mine anger, and the staff in their hand is mine indignation" (vs. 5, KJV). Here Assyria is God's appointed instrument to chastise Israel. But haughty Assyria itself will come to an end after the divine purpose is fulfilled (vss. 12–19). With this prediction we have gone beyond conditionality and are in the realm of divine sovereignty.

The second example is that of Cyrus (44:28; 45:1–6). Here is a heathen king called by name (vs. 4) before his birth so that Yahweh's plan to restore Israel from Babylonian captivity may come to fruition. Is this a conditional prophecy? Is it not rather to be interpreted in terms of God's foreknowledge and sovereignty?

We do not find as many short-term predictions in the NT, but there are some. Agabus foretells the famine (Acts 11:28); the friends of Paul foresee by the Spirit the bonds that await him in Jerusalem (Acts 20:23; 21:10-11). The most significant short-term prediction, however, is the fall of Jerusalem and the destruction of the temple (Matt 24: Mark 13; Luke 21).

Conditionality is mentioned in none of these predictions. With Paul, the only "if" lies in the decision to go or not to go to Jerusalem. There is no hint that the impending fall of Jerusalem is conditional. The question is only, "When shall these things be?" (Matt 24:3, KJV).

It is obvious, therefore, that when interpreting short-term predictions outside the covenant provisions, we cannot confine our consideration merely to the principle of conditional prophecy. Indeed, conditionality may not in fact be a significant element in the interpretation.

Long-term Predictions

Our remarks here are in the context of general prophecy; we consider later the question of apocalyptic.

We agree with the observation that general prophecy focuses on the prophet's own times. ²² Occasionally, however, we find long-term predictions—those that have to do with the very end of time. The expression "the day of the Lord" is a case in point. This term signifies God's judgment on a city or nation: it is the day of retribution when justice can no longer be withheld. While "the day of the Lord" usually refers to impending doom for the nation of Israel, it gradually takes on a wider aspect. It comes, in some prophecies, to indicate the end of all things, as Israel's punishment is extended on a cosmic scale (Joel 1:15, 2:1, 3:14; Isa 2:2, 12; 34:8; Amos 5:18–20; Ezek 7:19; Zeph 1:7, 14, 18; 2:2; 2 Pet 3:7–12).

It is out of such consideration that some passages in general prophecy may be seen to have dual application. While in their original context they had a message that addressed the people of Israel, they also apply to conditions at the close of human time, when the judgments on Israel are painted on a worldwide canvas.

We cannot use a principle of simple conditionality in interpreting such prophecies. The eschatological flavor takes them beyond the covenant promises/threatenings. If we may hold rightly that such threats to ancient Israel were conditional, it is certain that their application to the end-time is not conditional.

The NT contains many apparently long-term predictions. It is difficult to know how long is the period envisaged by NT writers, since the NT contains such a strong note of imminence.²³ This question also draws us into the apocalyptic portions of the NT—an area which we will take up shortly. Leaving aside Mark 13 (Matt 24; Luke 21) and Revelation, however, it is clear that the NT predicts developments that will affect the church.

For example, the "man of sin" is to arise before the Second Coming (2 Thess 2:3); there is to be a "falling away" (Acts 20:29–30); "perilous times" are to arise (2 Tim 3:1–9); persecutions will increase (1 Pet 4:12). And the supreme happening, the event of all events is the return of Jesus in the clouds (Acts 1:9–11; John 14:1–3; 1 Thess 4:14–18). This event permeates the entire NT, not merely its apocalyptic parts, imbuing its message with hope and expectation.

The conditionality principle is nowhere in evidence in these long-term predictions. These prophecies come with the ring of the divine foreknowledge; as such they are presented as inevitable. Although none but the Father knows the precise date of the Parousia, the event is fixed, altogether sure. Only one passage suggests the possibility that that day may be hastened, but the passage (2 Pet 3:12) itself may be translated as "waiting for and earnestly desiring" instead of "waiting for and hastening the coming of the day of God." (Ellen White's writings, however, do lend support to the idea of the time of the second advent, but not the certainty of its occurrence, being subject to human response.)

Predictions of the First Advent of Christ

Paul wrote to the Galatians: "When the fulness of time was come, God sent forth his Son, ..." (4:4, KJV). What do his words connote? That the first coming of Christ, the Incarnation, was not by chance. Rather, it was according to God's own wisdom. Even though sincere followers of God had awaited Messiah's appearance for centuries, God had His own timetable; when the time had come fully, He appeared. Church historians have often drawn attention to the way "the world" had been prepared for the birth of Jesus; beyond this, however, we should recognize the divine outworking of the plan of salvation.

The coming of the Messiah, the seed of Abraham in whom all nations of earth would be blessed (Gen 12:3), is clearly part of the covenant promises made to Israel. Yet it transcends the covenant, since the Messiah is for all nations, not just Israel. In that transcending the conditionality principle that rules the covenant promises and threatenings is subjugated. Was Messiah's coming delayed because Israel had not prepared the world for Him? We have no hint of it. Surely such preparation as they *had* made was feeble, but Messiah came. He *had* to come! In the fulness of the time God sent Him forth.

It seems impossible to apply the conditionality principle to the prophecies of the Messiah. That He would come of the line of Judah (Gen 49:10), that He would be the son of David (Isa 11:1), that He would be born in Bethlehem (Mic 5:2), that He would be the Saviour, the Substitute for our sins (Isa 53)—how can we speak of "conditionality" in these predictions? Over and over Matthew quotes the OT with the formula: "that the Scriptures might be fulfilled" (1:22; 2:15, 17, 23; 4:14; 8:17, etc.). Even His name is told to Mary before His birth (Matt 1:21)—surely a microcosm of the divine foreordering of Messiah's first coming! Beyond the specific prophecies which usually we label "Messianic," the entire OT looks to Him. It is a work of expectation, moving forward and narrowing in upon the birth which is celebrated in the NT.²⁴

Conclusions

The implications of this classification of the non-apocalyptic portions of biblical prophecy are profound for the conditionality idea. The analysis suggests that, far from conditionality being a principle that may be, and indeed should be, applied to all biblical predictions, the very term "conditional prophecy" is misleading in view of the biblical data. Indeed, for the most part so-called "conditionality" is rather covenant promise or covenant threatening. Remove the predictions that fall under the covenant with Israel and conditionality occupies a minor place in the biblical material.

With this background we shall look specifically to the apocalyptic predictions of the Scriptures.

Conditionality and Apocalyptic

Despite the literary outpouring of scholars and learned conferences on apocalyptic, no clearcut definition has found acceptance. Apocalyptic as a literary genre is more readily identifiable, although even here we need to tread cautiously. Apocalyptic writing in general is characterized by symbolic language, graphic portrayals, colors, numbers, and secrets known only to the initiated. In terms of content, apocalyptic speaks of the radical disjunction of the ages—of the eclipse of the old era and the break-in of the new.

Some scholars have emphasized the unique features of apocalyptic, seeking to distance it from general prophecy of the Bible. On the other hand, others have drawn attention to the ancient character of apocalyptic and downplay the differences with general prophecy.

In this essay we do not presuppose one of these stances over against the other, nor do we attempt to resolve such areas of scholarly debate. We do hold, however, that biblical apocalyptic predictions are inspired by the same Spirit who called forth all the predictions of the Bible. We further hold that the selfsame Spirit will guide the sincere seeker for truth as he endeavors to determine the role of conditionality in apocalyptic.

When we begin to examine biblical apocalyptic, we soon sense that we have entered another sphere. Though apocalyptic arises in Israel or Asia Minor, it burst the confines of Israel or Asia Minor. Though it first speaks a message of God to a nation in captivity (Daniel) or to churches undergoing persecution (Revelation), it transcends the immediate setting in which it came to birth. Apocalyptic has a cosmic sweep, and it rushes down the continuum of world history to focus on the end-time.

Obviously, we cannot examine every apocalyptic passage of the Bible in this paper. Instead, we shall focus our attention on the outstanding books of apocalyptic of the OT—Daniel and Zechariah, and on the most prominent literature of the NT—Matthew 24/Mark 13/Luke 21 and Revelation. Our concern throughout is with a single issue: What place does conditionality have in these apocalyptic predictions?

Daniel

When we compare the prophecies of the nations in Daniel 2, 7, and 8 with those of Isaiah, Jeremiah, or Ezekiel, we note a marked contrast. In Daniel, the place of Israel has receded, as has the element of threatenings. Rather, we behold a panorama, a march of the kingdoms leading on to the Eschaton (the End). We have become spectators to events on a world stage; we are seeing the divine foreknowledge unfold the course of the future.

Here are the ideas that rule the presentation of Daniel:

- "'Daniel said: 'Blessed be the name of God for ever and ever, to whom belong wisdom and might. He changes times and seasons; he removes kings and sets up kings; he gives wisdom to the wise and knowledge to those who have understanding; he reveals deep and mysterious things; he knows what is in the darkness, and the light dwells with him.'"
- "'There is a God in heaven who reveals mysteries, and he has made known to King Nebuchadnezzar what will be in the latter days.'"
- "'He who reveals mysteries made known to you what is to be.'"
- "'The dream is certain, and its interpretation sure.'"
- "'Your God is God of gods and Lord of kings, and a revealer of mysteries.'"
- "For his dominion is an everlasting dominion, and his kingdom endures from generation to generation; all the inhabitants of the earth are accounted as nothing; and he does according to his will in the host of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth; and none can stay his hand or say to him, 'What does thou?'"
- "The Most High God rules the kingdom of men, and sets over it whom he will."

These ideas center in the divine sovereignty and divine foreknowledge. In this presentation the human side of history, while portrayed in the ebb and flow of the fortunes of the people of God, is gathered up within the ruling conception of Yahweh as Lord of history. We search in vain for the element of conditionality.

So we hear the prophetic time periods laid out before us. They are long ones. In keeping with the panoramic scope of history in which they are given, they must be such. We hear of 1,260 days for the reign of the blasphemous "little horn" power (7:25) and of 2,300 days until the sanctuary shall be vindicated, after the evil work of the "little horn" (8:14). Given the setting, these time predictions cannot be meant literally.²⁵

Since our studies of general prophecy showed the importance of identifying any covenant setting, we need to take note of this motif in the book of Daniel. In fact, the covenant idea does occur in two lines of prophecy—chapter 9 and chapter 11. Do these occurrences suggest that conditionality is a "hidden agenda" of the book?

Not at all. We need, first of all, to distinguish clearly between Daniel's own hopes and understanding and the unfolding of the future that Yahweh, Lord of history, communicated to him. Daniel, though prominent in public life, is a captive—along with his people. Jerusalem is in exile; the sanctuary is desolate. Out of this situation Daniel prays for the restoration of his people, his city, his sanctuary (9:1–19). His prayer is based on the covenant: the desolations have come in fulfillment of the threats "written in the law of Moses" (9:13); likewise that law provides hope of Yahweh's mercy.

But the predictions given to Daniel far outstripped the history of Israel. Indeed, Daniel could not comprehend the vision of chapter 8, with its sanctuary references (8:27). Likewise, the reply to his prayer went far beyond the restoration of city and temple to the Messiah (9:24-27).

Israel and covenant are mentioned also in the prophecy of chapter 11 (11:22, 28, 30–35). It may be significant that, as in 9:24–27, the apocalyptic nature of chapter 11 is much less evident than in chapters 2, 7, and 8. Even if we include chapter 11 under apocalyptic, however, two observations are valid.

- 1. The fortunes of Israel are treated in a relatively minor manner—the concern is with the conflict between "the king of the north" and "the king of the south."
- 2. We find no hint of conditionality—indeed, the very nature of the prophecy, detailed as it is and linked through many generations, speaks strongly against conditionality as a factor in interpretation.

Zechariah

The book of Zechariah is among the most obscure of the Scriptures. Although, like Daniel, it contains apocalyptic, it has not attracted the careful study of Adventist scholars. In making this observation we are not faulting necessarily Adventist scholarship. Apocalyptic documents per se are not of equal value to us.

The portions of Zechariah that might be construed as apocalyptic are chapters 1–6 and 9–14. The first six chapters are disputable in terms of their apocalyptic character, depending on one's definition of apocalyptic. However, they are highly symbolic and, for the sake of completeness, we will include them in this paper. Chapters 9–14 seem clearly apocalyptic.

Zechariah, like Haggai, was a prophet to the Jews who returned from exile. The two messengers from Yahweh were instrumental in galvanizing the Jews to rebuild the temple (see Ezra 6:14). Zechariah 1–6 reflect these national concerns. Through a series of visions Yahweh conveyed His concern for Jerusalem (chap. 1), the rebuilding of the city (chap. 2), His acceptance of Joshua the high priest (chap. 3), the certainty of the success of the people's efforts (chap. 4), the removal of sin from the restored community (chap. 5), and God's superintendence of affairs (chap. 6).

These chapters show a conditional element. The prophet's opening words are: "The Lord was very angry with your fathers. Therefore say to them, Thus says the Lord of hosts: Return to me, says the Lord of hosts, and I will return to you, says the Lord of hosts. Be not like your fathers, to whom the former prophets cried out, "Thus says the Lord of hosts, Return from your evil ways and from your evil deeds." But they did not hear or heed me, says the Lord "(Zech 1:2-4).

But this is not conditionality with respect to long-term predictions. Rather, the setting is within the covenant made with the people of Israel. That is, Zechariah 1–6, whether or not we classify the chapter as apocalyptic, is of the same order as the first category in the classification of general prophecy.

Although Zechariah 9–14 looks beyond the immediate concerns of the prophet and his people, the visions are still within the setting of the covenant. "As for you ..., because of the blood of my covenant with you, I will set your captives free from the waterless pit," promises Yahweh to Israel (9:11). God's wrath will fall upon Israel's enemies (9:1–8), especially as they gather against Jerusalem in battle (14:2–3). Though Israel will suffer travail, God will deliver her: "I will strengthen the house of Judah, and I will save the house of Joseph" (10:6).

In these chapters, then, it seems undeniable that (1) apocalyptic is present, and (2) the center of the predictions is Israel (see, for example, 14:16, those who survive the great battle against Jerusalem keep the feast of booths). These chapters belong among the other OT prophecies to Israel which could not find realization because the nation refused to walk within the provisions of the covenant with Israel.

Thus, chapters 1–6 and 9–14 are of a piece—conditional, inasmuch as the covenant is conditional on the human response. Although these prophecies may be viewed as apocalyptic in form, covenant clearly takes priority. Apocalyptic may be merely a vehicle through which the covenant promises and threatenings to Israel are portrayed.

Matthew 24/Mark 13/Luke 21

With our Lord's prediction we have left behind Israel and covenant. We need but ask, Does His prophecy point to conditionality?

It does not. Instead of conditions we find signs—a series of signs in order that herald the great return. The last of these is the preaching of the gospel throughout the whole world (Matt 24:14).

The Prince of Prophets speaks here. He speaks, not in terms of human conditions that must be met, but of events that unerringly presage His coming.

Revelation

The book of Revelation is of a similar order to Daniel. John is told to write "the things which are, and the things which shall be [not may be] hereafter" (1:19, KJV, emphasis supplied). He sees the struggles of the people of God, the final judgment scene (chaps. 5, 20), a remnant people at the end of all things who stand faithful and loyal to God—those who "keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus" (14:12, KJV). As the world order comes to a total halt in the final outworking of the confederates of evil and in the divine intervention of punishment, God's people stand secure in Him. Beyond the turmoil, after the nightmare happenings preceding the second advent, there emerges at last a "new heavens and a new earth," where righteousness dwells.

So the great controversy, the agelong conflict between Christ and Satan, is ended. It is ended because God has ended it. Its end is as sure as the lordship of God over time and space.

Conclusion

We conclude, therefore, that, except in those passages where the covenant with Israel is the leading concern, apocalyptic predictions, whether OT or NT, do not hinge on conditionality. Rather, the divine sovereignty and foreknowledge are the leading ideas.

During the course of our study of general prophecy and apocalyptic, we have noticed various theological aspects that impinge on interpretation. We shall now give brief attention to them.

Theological Aspects Affecting Interpretation

Four theological matters relevant to conditional prophecy call for discussion: human freedom, divine sovereignty, the word of God, and divine foreknowledge.

Human Freedom

The strength of the conditionality principle is in its recognition of this biblical truth. The God of the Bible, although Creator and Lord of all, is love. It is the obedience of loving hearts that He seeks—hearts joined to Him in covenant relationship. In order to make human freedom a reality, not merely fiction, He limits His own freedom.

Human freedom is not absolute. Men and women are creatures, dependent on Yahweh even when they flaunt their freedom in disobedience. Yet God does not coerce; He has given the ability to choose or reject—even Himself.

Human freedom comes into play in those circumstances where prophets bring messages of correction and instruction. It is central to the promises and threatenings to Israel. It sometimes lies at the heart of a prediction to a foreign nation, as in the case of Jonah's prophecy against Nineveh.

Human freedom is grounded in the unchanging character of Yahweh. Human freedom means that man may change, as free choice is exercised. Change affects the relationship to Yahweh, bringing blessing or cursing. Yahweh, however, changes not: 26 His character is holy, His hatred of sin constant, His mercy long-suffering as human freedom is exercised.

Divine Sovereignty

While Yahweh's love makes human freedom a reality, He remains sovereign.²⁷ Throughout Scripture human freedom appears within this overarching concept: the Bible is God-centered, not man-centered. So there are limits which only Yahweh knows. Individuals, cities, nations pass beyond the invisible, silent point; their probation closes. Yahweh destroys the world with the Flood; He sends Messiah in "the fullness of time;" He eventually declares "It is done!" over the drama of the ages (Rev 16:17).

Throughout human history, apparently haphazardly, nations rise and fall, subject to time, chance, change. That is the human, myopic perspective. But the Bible (and Ellen White) shows God in control, superintending events on earth, working out His purposes toward a beneficent end. He is the One who "removeth kings, and setteth up kings: ..." "The most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will" (Dan 2:21; 4:32, KJV).

It is interesting that Ellen White at times writes in terms of divine sovereignty rather than human freedom. "Like the stars in the vast circuit of their appointed path, God's purposes know no haste and no delay." 28

In a biblical philosophy of history, therefore, human freedom must be held in tension with divine sovereignty. To deny the former is to make history deterministic; to repudiate the latter is to render it chaotic, uncertain, meaningless.²⁹

Word of God

This is an important biblical idea, especially in the OT. Adventists have not given it due place.

When God speaks, His will is carried out. His word carries with it authority and power: it creates a world out of chaos (Gen 1:5-27; Ps 33:6, 9), it brings on the Flood (Gen 6:3, 7, 13-21), it rescues a nation out of bondage (Exod 3:7-10), it dries up the Red Sea (Exod 14:15-18).

The Word of God is dynamic. Because it comes out from God, it has the ability to effect what it proclaims. That is why we read, "For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater: So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it" (Isa 55:10-11, KJV).

God's Word does not abrogate human freedom. It does not nullify Yahweh's compassion, His willingness to accept the turning back to Him. So the prophets add the "Who knows if ...?" of hope to their messages from the Lord to a stubborn, rebellious people.

While the Word of God does not cancel human freedom, it is clearly in the direction of the dynamic assurance, the effecting factor that guarantees that Yahweh will do what He has predicted.

Divine Foreknowledge

The biblical claim is specific and breathtaking: Yahweh can tell the future. This ability sets Him apart from all other claims to deity: "Let them bring them forth, and shew us what shall happen: let them shew the former things, what they be, that we may consider them, and know the latter end of them; or declare us things for to come. Shew the things that are to come hereafter, that we may know that ye are gods: yea, do good, or do evil, that we may be dismayed, and behold it together" (Isa 41:22–23, KJV; see also 43:9; 44:7–8; 45:21; 46:9–11; 48:5; Rev 1:19).

Human freedom and divine sovereignty stand in tension; divine foreknowledge is a third term, apart from both. It does not negate freedom. It foresees choices;³⁰ it does not determine them. And it presupposes divine sovereignty.³¹ Therefore, human freedom must never be isolated from God's sovereignty; and both must acknowledge His foreknowledge.

Conclusions

- 1. Conditionality is a valid principle of biblical interpretation. It arises from a due regard for the concern with human freedom that undergirds the biblical accounts of God's dealings with the human race.
- 2. Conditionality, however, may not be used indiscriminately in prophetic interpretation. Just as human freedom stands in tension with divine sovereignty in the Scriptures, so conditionality must give way to the fixed predictions of God in many prophetic passages. All biblical predictions are not conditional.
 - 3. The prophecies made to Israel in a covenant setting are conditional. They are applications of the law of the covenant rather than predictive prophecies per se. They are the usual occurrence of conditional predictions in the Bible.³²
 - 4. Since conditionality is found most frequently in the covenant setting, the term "conditional prophecy" itself is misleading.
- 5. In prophecies of the first and second advents, conditionality is not a major factor. These predictions are predicated on the divine intervention in history as God asserts His sovereignty to effect His will in working out the plan of salvation.³³
- 6. Apocalyptic predictions are usually unconditional. Only where the covenant setting with Israel predominates is conditionality present; and then it indeed is present. Elsewhere the divine sovereignty and foreknowledge portray history on the grand scale.
- 7. It is vital, therefore, that any biblical prophecy be studied carefully in interpretation. We by no means rule out conditionality; we merely suggest that we may not without due consideration employ conditionality as the key to interpretation. We must first study carefully the original context, noting the type of literature. (Is it general prophecy or apocalyptic? Does it fall within the covenant promises and threatenings?) Finally, we should see what application, if any, another inspired writer makes of the prophecy.

Thus, by thorough investigation, by a truly biblical grasp of history, we may steer a course between the Scylla of extreme conditionality and the Charybdis of aconditionality. God's Word is not mysterious, nor is it obscure. It will reveal its truths to those who earnestly seek to know His will. On the other hand, we must employ sound principles of interpretation, avoiding the traps of subjectivism, oversimplification, or sensationalism, it is as we rightly divide the Word of truth that we discern its messages for us.

CHAPTER IX

Fulfillments of Prophecy

Gerhard F. Hasel

Editorial synopsis. Predictive matter comprises approximately 27 percent of the Bible's contents. The figure includes typological predictions as well as straightforward prophecy.

In this chapter the author is concerned with analyzing the nature or characteristics of prophetic *fulfillments*. For example, the Bible writer may say, "this was to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet," or this event occurred "according to the word of the Lord," or some similar phrasing. On the other hand many fulfillments occur in the biblical accounts without such formulas being stated. Formula-attendant fulfillments as stated in the OT reveal the following characteristics:

- 1. Emphasis is placed on the fact that the particular event occurred "according to the word of the Lord." The prediction did not fail or "fall to the ground."
- 2. Predictions are fulfilled in actual history and precisely according to the details of the prophecy.
- 3. The time lapse between prediction and fulfillment varies. Some predictions meet immediate fulfillment, some within a few years. Others are not fulfilled until decades or centuries later.
- 4. Every prediction in this category that was examined met a once-for-all-time fulfillment.
- In the NT the Gospel of Matthew contains twelve fulfillment statements which shed further light on the nature of prophetic fulfillments. These statements identify with three kinds of general prophecy:
- 1. Straightforward prophecy. Micah foretold that the birth of the Messiah would take place in a specific town: Bethlehem in Judah. (There were two Bethlehems—one in Judah, the other in Zebulun. Josh 19:15). Matthew records the exact fulfillment by the birth of Jesus in Bethlehem in Judea (Matt 2:1, 6).
- 2. Typological prophecy. Hosea's statement, "I ... called my son out of Egypt" (Hos 11:1) is seen by Matthew to meet a fulfillment in Jesus' return to Palestine from Egypt with His parents (Matt 2:14–15). This is best understood by an Israel-Messiah typology. The Messiah embodies in Himself the ideal Israel. Matthew sees under inspiration a typological correspondence and a predictive element in the type—the coming out of Egypt of God's son, Israel; the coming out of Egypt of God's Son, the Messiah.
- 3. Dual prophecy. Some prophecies appear to have a divinely intended twofold fulfillment. Isaiah's prophecy of the virgin birth provides an example (Isa 7:14). At first this may appear to have some modifying influence on the numerous prophecies and their fulfillments examined under point 4 noted above as far as the OT by itself was concerned. However, genuine fulfillments of a prophecy intended to have a dual fulfillment are not determined by the subjective imaginings of the interpreter.

A dual fulfillment may be recognized only if scripture demands an initial and partial fulfillment and later scripture clearly indicates a final and complete fulfillment. In the case of Isaiah's prophecy, the historical context and contemporary setting requires a fulfillment in the time of King Ahaz and the prophet Isaiah. But the later inspired statement by Matthew indicates a final and complete fulfillment in the virgin birth of Jesus Christ (Matt 1:22–23).

Joel 2:28–32 may be cited also as an OT prophecy intended to have two fulfillments. God promised to cause the early and latter rains to fall upon the devastated lands of a penitent Israel (Joel 2:11–12, 23–27). As a spiritual counterpart to the rains, an outpouring of the Holy Spirit also was promised at some point in the future (2:28–32). The apostle Peter recognized the great Pentecostal operation of the Holy Spirit as fulfilling Joel's prediction (Acts 2:16). However, the data in the original prophecy referring to certain celestial wonders that would occur before "the great and terrible day of the Lord" as well as the biblical concept of the *latter rain* and the close of the harvest clearly indicate a future, more complete fulfillment, of the original prophecy (Joel 2:30–31; Acts 2:19–20).

Thus, it is evident that a divinely intended dual fulfillment is under scriptural control. Contextual specifications must be met, or a clear inspired fulfillment designation must be present. Such prophecies provide no basis for speculating on possible multiple fulfillments for either general/classical or apocalyptic kinds of prophecy.

Apocalyptic prophecy. Apocalyptic prophecy, such as composes the books of Daniel and Revelation, represents another body of predictive material that differs somewhat from general/classical prophecy which the author discusses up to this point in the chapter. In identifying genuine fulfillments of apocalyptic prophecy the following principles must be kept in mind.

- 1. The context is a sound and indispensable guide. Each aspect within the prophecy must be weighed and evaluated carefully.
- 2. A literal fulfillment is to be expected, unless there is clear inspired evidence that it should be non-literal.
- 3. Every detail must be met in the fulfillment. It is not a genuine fulfillment if only some specifications are met, but not others; nor can it be a genuine fulfillment if it is such only in principle and not in detail. All aspects of an apocalyptic prophecy must be met in order to have a true fulfillment of the prophecy.
- 4. Apocalyptic prophecies have neither dual nor multiple fulfillments. On the contrary each symbol has but one fulfillment. For example, in the book of Daniel each metal and each beast has only one fulfillment. The ten horns and the one horn in Daniel 7, the one and the four and the one in Daniel 8, have only one fulfillment. Dual, or twofold, fulfillments may be present in some general/classical prophetic predictions where contextual scriptural indications make this clear and the details of the specifications are met in each instance. But apocalyptic prophecy, as found in the books of Daniel and Revelation, has but one fulfillment for each symbol.

Chapter Outline

- I. Introduction
- II. Predictions With Fulfillment Statements
 - A. Predictions With Fulfillment Statements in the OT
- B. Predictions With Fulfillment Statements in the NT
- III. Fulfillment of Apocalyptic Prophecy
- IV. Conclusions

Introduction

To raise the question of prophetic fulfillments is to raise a question on the nature of prophecy. In popular usage today "prophecy" means more or less "prediction of the future." Thus "prophecy" is history written in advance. This view has been called into question vigorously not only in modern critical scholarship but also in early times.

As far as is known, the first one to challenge prediction and fulfillment was Celsus, the author of the first-known philosophical and religious criticism of Christianity (about A.D. 180). He attacked the view that the biblical prophets truly had predicted the future. He could not conceive that the detailed predictions in the book of Daniel about Alexander the Great and his successors could be advance presentations. Thus Celsus claimed that these predictions were based upon later knowledge of what actually happened; that is, they were prophecy written after the events occurred (vaticinia ex eventu).

A short time later the Neo-Platonic philosopher, Porphyry (A.D. 232 to about A.D. 305), devoted the twelfth volume of his monumental fifteen-volume work, *Against the Christians*, to the book of Daniel. Porphyry denied "that it [the prophecy of Daniel] was composed by the person to whom it is ascribed in its title, but rather by some individual living in Judaea at the time of the Antiochus who was surnamed Epiphanes."³

The church father Jerome (about A.D. 345–419) notes in his refutation of Porphyry that the latter recognized the accuracy of the predictions in the book of Daniel regarding both the four empires and the coming of Christ. Jerome states that Porphyry saw "that all these things had been fulfilled and could not deny that they had taken place." He attempted to overcome this historical accuracy by "contending that whatever [was] foretold ... was actually fulfilled in the reign of Antiochus Epiphanes [175–164 B.C], ..." This striking reliability of the fulfillment of Daniel's predictions has remained a stone of stumbling also in modern times.

It was during the age of the Enlightenment (eighteenth century) with its accompanying Deism that deists and others adopted the views of these pagan opponents of Christianity. The English scholar Anthony Collins popularized the views of Porphyry for critical biblical scholarship (1727). His endorsement included the vaticinia ex eventu ("written after the event") nature of the book of Daniel and its corollary that it was a second century forgery.

Collins' criticism of the fulfillment of prophecy⁸ was decisive for the rationalistic mind-set. So also was his position on the late authorship of Daniel. Modern liberal scholarship scarcely has improved on it.⁹ These links with the past are important for an understanding of the intellectual climate in the modern period to which present-day scholarship is indebted.

It is not our purpose to trace the history of the denials that biblical prophets are able to predict the future. We present only a few highlights. One strange assertion is that predictions have been fulfilled intentionally by persons who knew the predictions and set out to fulfill them. Thus it has been claimed, for example, that Jesus intentionally plotted His life, sufferings, and death according to OT messianic predictions so as to give the appearance of being the predicted Messiah whom He believed He was. ¹⁰ It is evident nevertheless that there were too many matters of fulfillment in Jesus' early and later life that were beyond His control to arrange so as to fulfill OT prophecy.

An axiom of certain branches of modern historical-critical study of OT prophecy is that prophecy and prediction are not identical.¹¹ What this means is that the prophet is actually not a "foreteller" who predicts events that are to take place in the future. This is supposedly the business of apocalyptic as contained in the books of Daniel and Revelation.¹² In this view the primary task of the classical prophets (major and minor) was to be "forthtellers" whose proclamation addressed the people of their own day and not the future whether near or distant.¹³

The distinction between prophets as "forthtellers" and not "foretellers," as proclaimers and not as predictors, is "now often rejected as facile." It is now noted that "while the predictive element in apocalyptic is much greater than in true prophecy, numerous predictions are to be found also in the words of the great [writing] prophets." [5]

This does not mean that the matter of long-range prediction is acknowledged very widely in modern liberal scholarship. Whereas in older liberalism the biblical prophet is seen as a pure "forthteller" or preacher to his own time and circumstances, the new liberalism allows for short-range prediction in the prophet's own time. The rule of thumb is as follows: "A prophecy is earlier than what it predicts, but contemporary with, or later than, what it presupposes." 16

This principle works on the basis of the presupposition that the OT prophet can predict only for his own time and circumstances on the basis of his human insights, but this cannot be done by him for a time later than his own. This impinges, for example, on the prophecy about Cyrus (Isa 44:28; 45:1) which "presupposes that Israel is in exile, that Jerusalem is in ruins, and that the most important man on the horizon at the moment is Cyrus." Therefore the author of these predictions must live at that time. He cannot be the Isaiah of Jerusalem who ministers for six decades (740/39 to ca. 680 B.C.), about 150 years before Cyrus.

In fact, it still is suggested by some that these predictions of an unknown prophet (usually called Deutero-Isaiah) were written after the event had occurred (ex eventu).¹⁹ Thus, there is not even short-range prophecy made about 150 years before the fulfillment took place.²⁰ Obviously the philosophical and theological perspectives of each scholar come into play here. As one scholar stated some time ago, "No one who believes in a living, personal, omniscient God, and in the possibility of His revealing future events, will ever deny that He possesses the power to foretell the name of a future monarch."²¹

There is one other instance in the Bible where the name of a king was predicted in advance, even 300 years before he was born. An unnamed prophet predicted to Jeroboam I (931–909 B.C.) that "a son [would] be born to the house of David, Josiah by name" who would desecrate and destroy the king's idolatrous religious system (1 Kgs 13:2). This prophecy was fulfilled (2 Kgs 23:15–16). Josiah was born and reigned over Judah (2 Kgs 22:1–23:30) from 640–609 B.C.²² This amazing detail in prophecy and fulfillment reflects the fact that God knows the inner workings of history, and on the basis of His foreknowledge, He is able to reveal the future.

The book of Isaiah declares the superiority of God on this point. "I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is no one like Me, declaring the end from the beginning and from ancient times things which have not been done, saying, 'My counsel will be established, and I will accomplish all My good pleasure' (Isa 46:9–10, NASB). Prediction is undeniably part of God's scriptural revelation. This does not deny that the prophet invariably addressed also the present situation as well as the immediate future. Prophets were spokesmen for the present as well as the near and distant future.

In biblical faith the understanding of history is not cyclical. Rather, history moves forward to a goal, indeed, a final goal. The Creator of the world is all-powerful. He is not a cosmic clock maker who made the universe to tick on its own. The living Creator is also the Lord over history. History is meaningful because it is ultimately under the control of God. The eternal God made the beginning of history in Creation. He knows and controls the subsequent course of history and leads it forward to its final goal in a new heaven and new earth. Part of this activity of God in history, taking it to its appointed goal, is prediction and fulfillment.

Predictions With Fulfillment Statement

The Bible contains many predictions. The amount of predictive matter is said to consist of 8,352 verses out of a total of 31,124 verses, or 27 percent (OT, 28.5 percent; NT, 21.5 percent) of both straightforward predictions (5,457 verses, or 17.5 percent of the Bible) and typological predictions (2,895 verses, or 9.5 percent of the Bible).²³

In a number of instances we discover that the OT as well as the NT refers explicitly to a fulfillment of a prophecy by using a fulfillment statement or a formula quotation. It is anticipated that the predictions followed by later fulfillment statements will provide basic principles for identifying the fulfillment of those predictions where no fulfillment statements are found.

Another category is predictions without later fulfillment statements. These predictions, by far the larger quantity of predictive material in the Bible, have fulfillment in OT times, or in NT times, or beyond, or fulfillment may be expected yet to take place.

We must touch briefly on the matter of conditional prophecy. The principle of conditionality is set forth clearly in Jeremiah 18:7–10. The prophecies that relate to man's moral behavior potentially contain the element of conditionality. The concept of conditionality is illustrated in Jeremiah 26:12–13; 38:17–18; and 42:10–17. Insofar as a prophecy was inherently dependent on man's moral behavior, the prophetic prediction seemed to be conditional. The principle of human repentance or turning can modify the prediction-fulfillment scheme in such a way as to bring about a change in God's response (Jer 26:19; Jonah 3:9–10). Although the principle of conditionality is an important element in predictive prophecy where moral behavior is involved, not all predictions of the Bible are necessarily conditional. There are many unconditional prophecies in Scripture (cf Gen 3:15; Amos 1–2:8; Dan 2, 7, 8, 11–12).

Predictions With Fulfillment Statements in the Old Testament

The necessity for fulfillment of a prophecy is stated clearly as a mark of a true prophet. "When a prophet speaks in the name of the Lord, if the thing does not come about or come true, that is the thing which the Lord has not spoken. The prophet has spoken it presumptuously" (Deut 18:22, NASB). The criterion of the truth of the prophetic predictions or judgments would lie in their fulfillment.

The Bible is explicit in its assertion of valid predictions. "I, the Lord, have spoken; surely this will I do" (Num 14:35, RSV). Disbelief in prophetic fulfillment is countered by God's assertion to Moses: "Is the Lord's hand shortened? Now you shall see whether my word will come true for you or not.'" (Num 11:23, RSV). The prophet Micah affirms, "Thou wilt show faithfulness ... as thou hast sworn to our fathers from the days of old" (Mic 7:20, RSV).

In the writings of the prophet Zechariah a view is found that looks centuries into the past in the words of the Lord: "my words and my statutes, which I commanded my servants the prophets, did they not overtake your fathers?... As the Lord of hosts purposed to deal with us for our ways and deeds, so has he dealt with us" (Zech 1:6). The Bible makes clear on its own terms that there is predictive prophecy of short-range and long-range which leads to genuine and valid fulfillment in history.

There are scores of prophetic predictions in various parts of the OT where the fulfillment is designated plainly. At times the Hebrew expression hēqîm (the hiphil form of the verb qûm)—meaning "fulfill, establish, confirm"—is the major term used to indicate the fulfillment of an earlier promise or prediction. Or, fulfillment may be pointed out in other ways by various expressions or phrases. Some of these call for our attention.

In Genesis 12:7 God promises Abraham, "To your descendents I will give this land." This prediction God repeats to him several times. (See Genesis 13:14–15, 17; 15:7, 18; 17:8.) It is also given to Isaac (Gen 26:2–4) and Jacob (Gen 28:13, 15; 35:12). It is repeated early in Moses' experience (Exod 3:8, 17; 6:6–8) and again after the Exodus (Exod 23:23–33; cf 34:24).

In Deuteronomy 9:5 God's graciousness in giving the land is emphasized. The gift of the land is an act of grace and not reward. The promised land would be given to Israel "in order to confirm [fulfill] the word which the Lord swore to your fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob." God's action was "part of the fulfillment of the ancient promise made to the patriarchs."²⁴

The promise of the land theme continues throughout the Pentateuch.²⁵ By the time of the death of Joshua (Josh 23:1, 14), the Lord had given to Israel "all the land which he swore to give to their fathers; and having taken possession of it, they settled there.... Not one of the good promises which the Lord had made to the house of Israel had failed; all came to pass" (Josh 21:43–45, RSV).²⁶

At the time of the conquest of Jericho (Josh 6) the prediction was made (in the form of a curse) that the man who "rises up and builds" (or "re-fortifies")²⁷ Jericho would suffer loss. "With the loss of his first-born shall he lay its foundation, and with the loss of his youngest son he shall set up its gates" (vs. 26, NASB). In the time of King Ahab some 700 years later, we are informed that Hiel rebuilt Jericho. True to the prediction, "he laid its foundations with the loss of Abiram his first-born, and set up its gates with the loss of his youngest son Segub, according to the word of the Lord, which He spoke by Joshua the son of Nun" (1 Kgs 16:34, NASB).

Through the prophet Nathan God promised David subsequent to his death, "I will raise up your descendant after you, who will come forth from you, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build a house for My name" (2 Sam 7:12–13, NASB). Solomon succeeded his father David on the throne and built the temple specifically stating, "Now the Lord has fulfilled His word which He spoke" (1 Kgs 8:20, NASB). The conditionality of this prediction is emphasized twice (1 Kgs 2:4; 6:12).

Samuel, the prophet, predicted that after leaving him Saul would meet successively "two men," then "three men," and finally a band of prophets (1 Sam 10:2-7). Details about each group are given. The fulfillment is noted as follows: "And all those signs came about on that day" (vs. 9, NASB).

The prophet Ahijah predicted that ten tribes would be taken from Solomon's kingdom, because of unfaithfulness (1 Kgs 11:11–13, 26–40). The fulfillment is cited expressly: "It was a turn of events from the Lord, that He might establish [or 'fulfill']²⁹ His word, which the Lord spoke through Ahijah the Shilonite to Jeroboam the son of Nebat" (1 Kgs 12:15, NASB).

A threatening prophecy is directed against Jeroboam's altar at Bethel. A descendant of David, named Josiah, would slay the priests of the high places on the altar and would burn human bones upon it (1 Kgs 13:2, 32). The fulfillment came about 300 years later when king Josiah did what was predicted "according to the word of the Lord which the man of God proclaimed" (2 Kgs 23:16, NASB).

It was predicted that the prophet, who ate at Bethel in disobedience to God's command, would not be buried with his fathers (1 Kgs 13:22). Subsequently, he was killed by a lion and buried in Bethel (vs. 30). His death and burial happened "according to the word of the Lord which He spoke to him" (vs. 26, NASB).

Ahijah predicted the demise of Jeroboam's dynasty because of the evil he had instigated (1 Kgs 14:10-14). This was fulfilled by the usurper Baasha who not only killed Jeroboam's son Nadab (909-908 B.C.)³⁰ who succeeded his father on the throne, but also all the other male members of the house of Jeroboam, "according to the word of the Lord, which He spoke by His servant Ahijah the Shilonite" (1 Kgs 15:29, NASB).

A long-range prophecy also was made by the same Ahijah. He predicted that because of Jeroboam's sins the ten-tribe kingdom of Northern Israel would be uprooted "from this good land" and scattered "beyond the Euphrates River" (1 Kgs 14:15–16, NASB). This was fulfilled by Assyria about 200 years later when Samaria fell in 722 B.C. to Assyrian conquest and Northern Israel went into Assyrian exile (2 Kgs 17:6–7; 22–23).

Elijah predicted that Ahab's dynasty (like the house of Jeroboam) was to be swept away totally and their corpses left unburied (1 Kgs 21:21-22, 24). The fulfillment came about 40 years later when Jehu (2 Kgs 9:24; 10:7) left "none remaining" (2 Kgs 10:11, 17). It is emphasized, "Know then that there shall fall to the earth nothing of the word of the Lord, which the Lord spoke concerning the house of Ahab, for the Lord has done what He spoke through his servant Elijah" (vs. 10, NASB; cf. vs. 17).

Elijah also predicted that "the dogs [would] eat Jezebel in the district of Jezreel" (1 Kgs 21:23, NASB). The fulfillment is recorded in 2 Kings 9:36–37 and introduced with the words, "This is the word of the Lord, which He spoke by His servant Elijah the Tishbite" (2 Kgs 9:36, NASB).

This list could be continued. Additional examples use expressions of fulfillment such as "according to the word of the Lord" (2 Kgs 4:44), or "as the man of God had said" (7:17, 20), or "this is the word of the Lord which He spoke" (15:12, NASB), or "according to the word of the Lord, the God of Israel, which He spoke through His servant Jonah" (14:25).

Several observations emerge when it comes to the fulfillment of predictions indicated by a formula statement:

- 1. Emphasis is placed upon the fact that things "came to pass" (Josh 21:45, RSV) or happened "according to the word of the Lord." 31
- 2. The Lord "fulfilled" $(h\bar{e}q\hat{i}m)^{32}$ His word that He predicted through His servants. That is, His promise had not "failed" $(n\bar{a}pal)^{33}$ or fallen to the ground. 34
- 3. The divine predictions were fulfilled in actual history as predicted. God's word is not "vain" or "empty" (req).35 The word for Yahweh "once uttered, reaches its goal under all circumstances in history...."36
- 4. A comparison of prediction and fulfillment indicates that the fulfillment occurs exactly according to the detail of the prediction. The fulfillment meets the prediction point by point. Every detail of the prediction counts in its fulfillment.³⁷ It is this fact that elicits belief.
 - 5. Some predictions are fulfilled immediately³⁸ or within a few years,³⁹ while others are fulfilled decades⁴⁰ or centuries later,⁴¹ but again with uncanny exactness.
 - 6. Every fulfillment noted in the OT is a once-for-all fulfillment. There are no dual (twofold) or multiple fulfillments in this category in the OT.

1. Quotations and allusions. An extensively researched phenomenon in the NT are quotations used from the OT.⁴² When we speak of quotations in the NT, we must make a sharp distinction between what is an explicit, formal quotation as such and what may be only an allusion. An explicit, formal quotation may be introduced by a formula or a special introductory statement, or it may be simply a direct quotation from the OT. It is suggested that there are 312 formal quotations from the OT in the NT.⁴³

Allusions are difficult to come by and are estimated to reach the number of 1,000 or 1,100.⁴⁴ Allusions are clauses, phrases, and sometimes single words. It is a well-known fact that the book of Revelation does not contain a single quotation, but it is very rich in allusions to the OT. The book of Daniel is never quoted in the NT beyond the one reference to it by Jesus (Matt 24:15; Mark 13:14). But allusions or Danielic phraseology⁴⁵ appear without any hint that Jesus Christ or the NT period fulfills the Danielic prophecies,⁴⁶ with the possible exception of Mark 1:15 as an allusion to Daniel 9:24–27.

In the NT the motif of fulfillment demonstrated with OT quotations is very strong. Quotations of fulfillment have to do with both direct OT predictions of future events and OT typological relationships. On account of the lack of space and time it is not possible to investigate exhaustively the NT fulfillment quotations from the OT. We restrict ourselves to some typical examples.

2. **Fulfillment-quotations**. The Gospel of Matthew is known to contain the so-called "Reflexionszitate," also designated as "formula-quotations," or better, "fulfillment-quotations." They are so designated because they contain the introductory formula, "This was to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet," or "that what was spoken might be fulfilled." The Gospel of Matthew has twelve of these. They prove that the time of Jesus is the time of the fulfillment of the OT prophetic predictions concerning the coming of the Messiah.

A. Matthew 1:22–23. The reference in Matthew 1:22–23 to Isaiah 7:14 is the first such fulfillment-quotation (or formula-citation):⁵¹ "Now all this took place that what was spoken by the Lord through the prophet might be fulfilled, saying, 'Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and shall bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel;' which translated means, 'God with us'" (NASB). This is taken almost purely from a Septuagintal text, with the exception of a reading otherwise unknown to us from the Greek.⁵²

The use of parthenos ("virgin") in the Septuagint for the Hebrew 'almāh ("young woman" of marriageable age which is, of course, a virgin)⁵³ has given rise to some of the most famous debates in the history of interpretation.⁵⁴ There is no OT evidence that an 'almāh was already married. The choice of parthenos (not neanis, 55 "young woman") by the Septuagint translator represented a preference for understanding the 'almāh of Isaiah 7:14 as a "virgin," a concept which is by no means ruled out by the Hebrew term.

When it comes to the idea of fulfillment, there are several major views known today. The first one claims that Isaiah 7:14 is not a prediction given some 700 years before and fulfilled in the birth of Jesus Christ. The fulfillment took place in the era of the prophet Isaiah. The NT writer simply engages in a reinterpretation.

The modernistic view holds that it is "an indication of a Christian effort to supply the story of Jesus with OT background and support" here and in the other fulfillment quotations. Thus, this is a "proof-text" application to prove that Jesus was the foretold Messiah and to confirm an established Christian tradition. It is argued that Matthew follows the pesher style of treating the OT known from Qumran, or the midrash style known from Judaism.

In reaction to this modernistic view, several factors are important to note:

- 1. The fulfillment-quotations in Matthew (also in Mark and John)⁶² are without parallel in Qumran.⁶³ The Qumran community quotes OT Scripture often and writes *pesher* materials, but does not know or use fulfillment-quotations. On this basis it is no longer advisable to speak of *pesher*-type quotations, a *pesher*-type of interpretation, or a *midrash*-type of OT usage.⁶⁴ Although Matthew lived within the context of his world, there is uniqueness in his usage that stands by itself.
- 2. The understanding of prophecy and prediction and its ranges of fulfillment in historical-critical scholarship is conditioned by philosophical and resultant historical categories predicated upon presuppositions alien to those of the Bible.

A second major view on Matthew's fulfillment statement of Isaiah 7:14 is best described as a dual fulfillment. An initial fulfillment is believed to have taken place in the time of Isaiah, followed later by a final fulfillment in Jesus Christ. 65

We may be reminded that the dual meaning of prophecy—the dual fulfillment concept—was developed particularly in the Age of the Enlightenment (eighteenth century) in order to maintain both an original, literal fulfillment and a more complete fulfillment when applied to Jesus. 66 It was in this age that the Messiah Jesus Christ was erased by historical-critical scholarship from predictions in the OT. 67

We do not attempt to enter into a detailed discussion of the merits or faults of dual fulfillment. A dual fulfillment may be recognized, if the context demands an initial fulfillment and later Scriptures indicate clearly a final fulfillment. In any case, a dual fulfillment is never to be confused with multiple fulfillments. Multiple fulfillments are repeated fulfillments at different times and in different places without the constraints and contextual guidelines provided by Scripture.

The evidence in the OT and the NT and in their respective biblical contexts makes clear that dual fulfillments must meet the respective contextual controls. To recognize a fulfillment means to be meticulous to the context of the prediction, because in each instance of the dual fulfillment the contextual specifications must be met and/or a clear inspired fulfillment designation must be present.

The third major view on Matthew's fulfillment statement is that it was fulfilled in Jesus Christ and in Him alone. The contextual problem in Isaiah 7:14 that this single fulfillment position has to solve is explained in the following manner: Isaiah 7:15ff. described the situation in the immediate future, whereas "vs. 14 pointed to a single event that would occur 700 years later." Thus, "each part of the prediction had a single fulfillment."

The problem of the nature of the "sign" for Ahaz which would not take place until centuries later has been difficult to resolve.⁷¹ It has been suggested that the prophecy relates to two distinct births and two different children. One child, mentioned in verse 14, refers to Christ.⁷² Another child, mentioned in verse 16, refers to a contemporary fulfillment. However, it is said rightly that "nothing but extreme exegetical necessity could justify the reference of vers. 15, 16 to any person not referred to in ver. 14."⁷³

In summing up the whole, it may be stated that the suggestion that the prophecy of Isaiah 7:14 has no future but only a contemporary fulfillment is untenable and does not meet the Matthean intention of fulfillment.⁷⁴ The NT event took place in order to fulfill the OT passage cited. The NT fulfillment verifies the conception of predictive prophecy and indicates that God plans the whole saving history.

The choice then rests between a dual fulfillment with an initial fulfillment in the OT and a final one in the NT and a single fulfillment in the NT only. The dual fulfillment suggestion seems to have the most in its favor. It can account effectively for the contemporary and contextual needs as well as a future and final fulfillment.

B. Matthew 2:15. Our attention shall go next to the fulfillment-quotation of Hosea 11:1 in Matthew 2:15. In this instance Matthew quotes directly from the Hebrew text and not from the Septuagint.⁷⁶ The context of Hosea 11:1 indicates that the phrase "out of Egypt I called my son" refers collectively to the nation of Israel, which as a "child" was loved dearly by God. In its contextual setting the first impression is that it is not even a prophecy. Thus the question arises, if Hosea 11:1 refers to Israel's Exodus from Egypt, how can Matthew apply it to Jesus coming back from Egypt?

Various suggestions are given. For example, "In applying the passage to Jesus, Matthew seems to be thinking along the lines of corporate solidarity and rereading his Old Testament from an eschatologically realized and messianic perspective ... he evidences a pesher handling of the passage [of Hosea 11:1]." However, more careful research into pesher and midrash usage has demonstrated that Matthew does not follow these exegetical procedures in his fulfillment quotations. The research into pesher and midrash usage has demonstrated that Matthew does not follow these exegetical procedures in his fulfillment quotations.

A much better suggestion comes from those who have recognized here an Israel-Jesus typology. In this typological relationship Jesus Himself is the corporate existence of Israel. He is the Israel personified. "As the Messiah, Jesus occupied the status of antitype to national Israel under the Old Testament economy.... Therefore, in a very real sense Jesus, the incarnate Son of God, was Israel represented and personified. As such it was essential for Him to recapitulate, as it were, the career of His nation as it experienced God's deliverance from centuries of bondage under Egyptian power. From that perspective, the correlation between the Exodus of Israel and the return of Christ from Egypt is completely justified." Once this typological relationship is recognized, one can appreciate more fully that Matthew rightly sees both a typological correspondence and a predictive element in the coming out of Egypt of the son of God, Israel, and the Son of God, Jesus.

The question emerges, In what sense can Matthew refer to this typology of Israel-Messiah as a fulfillment? Did Matthew construe the Hosea passage as a predictive prophecy? These questions are legitimate. It happens that in the type there is a predictive aspect that can be discovered. Within the historical allusion Matthew can detect a predictive aspect in the correspondence contained in the two instances of God's son being called out of Egypt.... They [the correspondences] are divinely intended...." The typology has a built-in predictive element.

A further aspect in the matter of prediction is the one relating to the often emphasized point that a NT quotation of an OT text indicates that the whole context of that OT quotation was involved.⁸³ This means that Hosea 11:1 is not quoted as a "proof-text" against or out of its context but within its context.

The fulfillment means that "the Exodus deliverance of national Israel was a prophetic event for which the coming of the Messiah as personal Israel was the antitypical fulfillment...."⁸⁴ "There is no distortion or abuse of the context of Hosea by Matthew; nor has he added his own interpretation to the text."⁸⁵

In short, the fulfillment of Hosea 11:1 is along a typological relationship between Israel and the Messiah, the embodiment of all of Israel, both of whom were "sons" called out of Egypt.

C. Matthew 2:6. In Matthew 2:6 there appears a quotation from Micah 5:1. Micah makes reference to Bethlehem and predicts that from this town will come forth a ruler who will shepherd the people of Israel. ⁸⁶ It is striking that in both Micah and Matthew the Bethlehem is identified clearly. Micah, writing in poetry, calls it Bethlehem Ephrathah, using the old name. ⁸⁷ Ephrathah was a clan, an ally of Caleb (1 Chr 2:19, 24, 50), which was settled in the region of the Bethlehem located in Judah. Their name passed to the city. It appears that Micah employs Ephrathah as an identifier as to which of the two Bethlehems, the one in the north near Nazareth or the one to the south of Jerusalem, was to be the Messiah's birthplace. While Matthew does not use Ephrathah but has "the land of Judah" as a modifier to identify Bethlehem.

Matthew's identification is highly significant. Since there were two different places in Palestine designated by the name of Bethlehem, the Messiah needed to be born at the right Bethlehem. One was in Galilee (Josh 19:15), the other in Judah (Mic 5:1; Ruth 4:11; etc.).

This detail is significant for the precision of the fulfillment. Micah 5:1 was a prominent Messianic passage in the time of Christ, 88 accepted by the Jews as referring to the birthplace of the Messiah. 89

This survey of but three representative examples of the twelve fulfillment-quotations in the Gospel of Matthew has provided us with some basic understanding of NT fulfillments of OT predictions. In view of the complexity of the issues and the limited sample, we wish to draw some tentative conclusions:

- 1. If we are not misled, we find a *dual fulfillment* of the prediction of Isaiah 7:14. The initial fulfillment is suggested on the basis of its contextual setting. It is faithful to the wording of the prediction and under the control of the wording and specifications in the context. The second fulfillment is the final one. It is indicated in this instance by Scripture. In this dual fulfillment the contextual and other specifications are met in each instance. Scripture is the control for the fulfillment.
- 2. The prediction-fulfillment schema includes the *type-antitype* correspondence, or typological fulfillments (Hos 11:1 = Matt 2:15). Even here attention to detail is important. Both "sons," namely collective Israel as a national entity and corporate Israel as personified in Jesus Christ, are called out of Egypt.
- 3. In *straightforward* prediction-fulfillment correspondences (such as Micah 5:1 = Matthew 2:6) we continue to discover a clear insistance on detail. The Messiah is to be born in one of the two Bethlehems, namely Bethlehem Ephrathah which is the one in the land of Judah. Obviously detail counts in the prediction-fulfillment schema. Generalities or fulfillment in principle at the expense of an exact matching of detail is out of order in fulfillments. Thus the Bible provides its own guidelines for fulfillments of prophecies.

Various suggestions have been made regarding the purpose of the fulfillment quotations. It appears that the phrase "in order to fulfill" in Matthew has a primary purpose: to demonstrate that Jesus' life, down to the least detail, fulfilled the predicted plan of God as foretold in the OT concerning the Messiah. The fulfillment was exact to the detail, even in Jesus' birth and infancy. Such quotations of fulfillment must have been useful for missionary and teaching purposes, particularly in discussions with Jews who were steeped in the OT.

Fulfillment of Apocalyptic Prophecy

In the OT the expression "kingdom of God" or "kingdom of heaven," so characteristic of the NT and the teachings of Jesus, never appears. The OT knows God (or Yahweh) to be King, particularly the King of Israel (Deut 33:5; 1 Sam 12:12). Israel is the kingdom of Yahweh (1 Chr 17:14; 28:5; 2 Chr 13:8). The Lord could be addressed as "my King and my God" (Ps 5:2; 44:4; 68:24; etc.). Nevertheless, in OT apocalyptic eschatology the prediction is made that there will come an everlasting kingdom which will never be destroyed (Dan 2:34–35, 44–45; 7:13–14; 12:1–3). This will call for attention now.

Fulfillment of the Kingdom of God Prediction in Daniel 2

The dream of Daniel 2 predicts that the "stone," which strikes and destroys the image, is the kingdom of God. The question emerges, Is this the kingdom established at the first advent of Jesus Christ or at His second coming, or does it refer to both? The context of Daniel 2 and the details about the "stone-kingdom" carry the key for its fulfillment.

The context indicates that Daniel 2 is a dream about world history, presenting a succession of four world empires of declining value but superior strength. The last empire, symbolized by the legs of iron, divides itself into feet and toes of iron and clay, partly strong and partly weak. The kingdom which God will establish will be set up when the iron-clay feet and toes exist (vss. 33, 41).

The following are major indicators regarding the appearance of the kingdom of God:

1. **Time element**. Daniel 2:34 states, "it [the stone] smote the image on its feet of iron and clay." This indicates that the kingdom of God comes *after* the appearance of the four world empires and not during the existence of any one of them. This is fortified more explicitly in Daniel 2:44: "In the days of those kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom." The phrase, "in the days of those kings," indicates the time element.

Who are these "kings"? Strictly speaking none except Nebuchadnezzar has been mentioned. It is doubtful that "kings" refer to the four kingdoms absorbed in Rome. These kingdoms remain distinct in the dream. It is much more likely that the word "kings" in verse 44 refers to the division of kings as verse 43 implies and are represented by the feet and toes.

On this contextual basis, it appears that the kingdom of God is established at a time after the iron-and-clay phase had begun, which would rule out a fulfillment in Christ's first coming. Furthermore, support is found in the fact that each empire or kingdom succeeded the previous one. Accordingly the "everlasting" kingdom of God is expected to succeed the earthly kingdoms or kings of the iron-and-clay phase at the change of the aeons. 93

2. **Destruction of world kingdoms**. The stone breaks all world kingdoms into pieces: "All together were broken in pieces, and became like the chaff of the summer threshing floors; and the wind carried them away, so that not a trace of them could be found" (Dan 2:35, RSV). The idea of total destruction by the stone is emphasized again in verses 44–45 with the picture of the stone that "shall break in pieces all these kingdoms and bring them to an end, ... and ... broke in pieces the iron, the bronze, the clay, the silver, and the gold" (RSV).

If the "stone" were to represent the kingdom established by the Maccabees after the overthrow of the rule of Antiochus Epiphanes, then we would have to ask, (1) Did the Hasmonean kingdom put an end to all kingdoms? and (2) Did it stand forever? Likewise, if the "stone" were to represent the establishment of Christianity at the time of Christ, we would have to ask, Was the destruction of the world kingdoms accomplished at that time? The answer to all three would be, No.

Interpreters who favor a rise of Christianity as the fulfillment of the stone symbol are forced to suggest that "the striking of the feet is symbolical" but not real. Consistency, however, would require that the establishment of the king-dom of God likewise be symbolical and not real. The rise of the Christian church was, however, a reality.

In short, the picture of the destruction of the world kingdoms by the everlasting kingdom requires that the "end" (vs. 44) of the former be brought about at the end-time. Then a new aeon with the everlasting kingdom of God emerges supernaturally.

- 3. Divine origin. The third key element in the identity of the fulfillment of the prophecy of the stone kingdom of God relates to its origin. The text affirms that it "was cut out by no human hand" (Dan 2:34) or "was cut from a mountain by no human hand" (vs. 45). The expression "human hand" appears to refer to human agency or activity. The everlasting kingdom, however, has an origin other than one by human hands. It is of divine origin. The divine kingdom will be established in a cataclysmic way without human hand or agency.
- 4. Eternal duration. The fact is that this kingdom of God "shall never be destroyed, nor shall its sovereignty be left to another people" (2:44, RSV). In other words, "it shall stand for ever" (vs. 44c, RSV). The everlasting or eternal duration of this kingdom stands in sharp contrast to the transitoriness of the human world kingdoms. "Whereas the world-kingdoms had been taken over by succesive conquerors, none will take this kingdom by storm." ⁹⁵
- 5. Universal extent. The everlasting kingdom "became a great mountain and filled the whole earth" (Dan 2:34). The activity of filling the "whole earth" cannot be said to have taken place at the time of the establishment of Christianity. There is no hint that the kingdom of God will exist contemporaneously with "all these kingdoms." To the contrary, the stone kingdom puts a cataclysmic end to the world kingdoms.

The fact is that the universality of the eternal kingdom corresponds to the collapse of the whole statue at one time. The annihilation of all the kingdoms of the world is a prerequisite for the establishment of the kingdom of God on the "whole earth." The removal of "all these kingdoms" (2:44) makes room for the universal filling of the whole earth with the kingdom of God.

6. Instantaneous end and new beginning. The instantaneous end of the world kingdoms is emphasized by the fact that all the metals and the clay were crushed "all at the same time" (vs. 35, NASB; "all together," RSV).96 This concurrent and cataclysmic end of the world kingdoms makes room for the establishment of the new age with the eternal kingdom which "will itself endure forever" (vs. 44, NASB). The concluding chapter of Daniel gives a glimpse of the new beginning by pointing to the resurrection (Dan 12:1-3).97

It is evident from this brief survey of six details that the context of Daniel 2 makes certain that the stone kingdom will meet its fulfillment only at the end of the age, and not before.

As we continue our study we can see several principles of prophetic interpretation emerging in regard to the identification of a fulfillment:

- 1. The context is a sound and indispensable guide.
- 2. The literal fulfillment is basic unless there is inspired evidence that it should be non-literal.
- 3. Every point of identification and every detail must be met in the fulfillment, if it is to be genuine and valid. It will not do to have certain aspects fulfilled and other identifiers remain unfulfilled.
- A fulfillment in principle for apocalyptic prophecy hardly can be a valid fulfillment. If God designed a genuine dual fulfillment, each fulfillment must meet every point and detail, otherwise it cannot be considered to be a valid and genuine fulfillment.

Fulfillment of the Prophecy of Daniel 9:24-27

In the case of Daniel 9:24–27, for example, each element of the vision must be met by the proposed fulfillment, if the fulfillment is to have biblical validity. For example, some expositors have suggested that Daniel 9:24–27 is fulfilled in Antiochus IV Epiphanes as a type of a greater fulfillment in the Antichrist. Aside from many points of detail and identity that enter this question, we need only refer to one of the evident problems of this view: the chronology specifications of the prophecy. If Antiochus Epiphanes, who died in 164 B.C., is in view, then the beginning of the 490 years (the time span of the prophecy) can never be found. Those who come up with the suggestion that "the word" to restore Jerusalem" (Dan 9:25) began the prophecy in 594 B.C.⁹⁸ have to admit that it adds up to only 430 and not 490 years (594–164 = 430 years).⁹⁹ Even if the earliest date that has been suggested, namely 605 B.C., would be taken, ¹⁰⁰ the "whole period would still be only 441 years" (605–164 = 441 years).¹⁰¹ Can Antiochus Epiphanes qualify as a fulfillment when he can never fit the simplest chronological aspect of the 490 year prophecy?

If Antiochus is to fulfill Daniel 9:24-27, then the prophet must be charged with "chronological miscalculation" or "error." Or, one is forced to make the claim that "the angel Gabriel does not show himself well acquainted with chronology." Supporters of the Antiochus view prefer to say that the author or the angel is mistaken, rather than they.

On the contrary, the literal, historical interpretation of this key prophecy in Daniel fits perfectly from 457 B.C. to A.D. 34 with the Messiah Jesus Christ fulfilling the events with uncanny exactness. No other fulfillment fits the data of the prophecy. All aspects of the prophecy must be met in order to have a valid fulfillment of a prophecy.

Fulfillment of the Four World Empires

Daniel 2 introduces Nebuchadnezzar's dream of the great image with the head of gold, breast of silver, belly of bronze, legs of iron, and feet/toes of an iron and clay mixture. Daniel's interpretation makes clear that the fourfold sequence of gold-silver-bronze-iron represents four successive kingdoms (Dan 2:39–40).

Daniel 7 contains the account of a Danielic vision in which four great beasts come up out of the sea. The fourth beast is nameless because it has no zoological likeness. It has ten horns. Then an eleventh horn comes up among them. The angelic interpretation declares the four beasts to be four "kingdoms" (Dan 7:23).¹⁰⁶

Both Daniel 2 and 7 speak of four world empires. There follows a disintegration of the fourth empire into unstable divisions which, in turn, are brought to an end by an everlasting kingdom of divine, supratemporal origin.

The vast majority of writers on the book of Daniel are agreed that the four world empires of Daniel 2 and 7 are the same.¹⁰⁷ The classical sequence from ancient times, both Jewish¹⁰⁸ and Christian,¹⁰⁹ to the present is Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome. Interpreters agree (whether one follows this identification or another empire sequence ending in Greece as is customary by modern historical-critical exegetes)¹¹⁰ that each metal in the image or each beast respectively stands for only *one* world empire. In other words, these prophetic empire sequences have no dual fulfillment much less multiple fulfillments. They each have but a single fulfillment (Dan 2:38; 8:20–21).

Fulfillment of the Little Horn

The "little horn" makes its appearance in Daniel 7:8. It is described further in verses 20–21, 24–25. Commentators usually are agreed that the details provided in the spcifications of the "little horn" have to match the historical figure point by point (detail by detail), in order to have the correct identification. These criteria of detailed specifications cannot be neglected or disregarded. If only a principle or major idea is selected for the historical identification, then the whole process of historical identification is torn out of the biblical control and moved into the realm of subjectivity where individual imagination can run wild.

Certain writers on Daniel have identified the "little horn" with Antiochus IV Epiphanes (175–164 B.C.), the persecutor of Jews in Palestine and the one who defiled the temple (1 Macc 1:44–59ff.; 4:42–58). Other expositors have suggested that Antiochus IV Epiphanes is an initial fulfillment foreshadowing the true fulfillment in a later antichrist.

The single Antiochus fulfillment and also the dual Antiochus/later antichrist fulfillment encounter serious problems, several of which need to be mentioned:

1. The "little horn" is said to uproot three horns (Dan 7:8). Porphyry suggested that they were Ptolomy VI Philometer, Ptolomy VII Euergetes, and Artaxias, king of Armenia. However, the facts are that they were not uprooted by Antiochus IV, 112 although he fought against them. Each king remained on his throne. The efforts of scholars to come up with three kings that were uprooted by Antiochus have been fruitless. 113

2. The "little horn" is the "eleventh" one because it arose after the ten horns were in existence (Dan 7:8, 20). If Antiochus IV is to fulfill the "little horn symbol," he should be the "eleventh" king in the Seleucid line. But the fact is that he is the eighth king on the Seleucid throne. The search for ten Seleucid kings preceding Antiochus has been fruitless.

3. The time element for the horn's supremacy over the saints was to be three and one-half times (Dan 7:25). If this expression is taken as *literal years*, then Antiochus IV needs to have persecuted the Jews for three and one-half years. But the fact is that according to 1 Maccabees the persecution with the defilement of the temple lasted only three years. The period of time is too short by six months. Thus, it is admitted that a literal fulfillment does not fit Antiochus IV. 116

The only recourse, therefore, is to suggest that "one time, two times and half a time," that is, three and one-half literal years, is really just "a symbolic term for a period of evil." This suggestion will hardly do, because the figures three and one-half in the time specification lack the character of symbolical numbers such as four, seven, and ten.

4. When the "little horn" power comes to an end, the kingdom of God is established, following the judgment (Dan 7:17–18, 21–22, 25–27). If Antiochus IV is identified as the "little horn," then the kingdom following will have to be the kingdom of God. Judas Maccabeus overthrew the yoke of Antiochus IV in 164 B.C., 18 but it was not until 22 years later that the Hasmonean rule of high priests began. 19 It ended in 63 B.C. when Rome occupied Palestine. 120

Is the Hasmonean Kingdom which lasted from 142–63 B.C. the "everlasting kingdom" (Dan 7:27) which the saints of the most high will possess "for ever and ever" (vs. 18)? This is hardly possible. If we follow the identity of the "little horn" with Antiochus IV, we are faced again with another unfulfilled prediction.

Obviously these difficulties, aside from others, do not recommend the hypothesis that Antiochus IV Epiphanes is *the* fulfillment or even *one* fulfillment of the prediction of the "little horn." In this instance, as in the other instances in the book of Daniel, apocalyptic prophecy has but one fulfillment.¹²¹ This is mandated by both the specifications provided in the apocalyptic visions as well as by the pragmatic test of history that matches the details of the specifications with a proposed identification.

In the book of Daniel there is no evidence for multiple fulfillments or even dual fulfillment. With respect to the latter, namely dual fulfillment, it should be noted that a single fulfillment is required for each world empire and each horn in the case of the ten and the one in Daniel 7 and the one, the four and the one in Daniel 8. The "little horn" has but one fulfillment.

Furthermore, one must not overlook the fact that where there is prediction and fulfillment in the book of Daniel as in the case of the "Vision of the Tree" (Dan 4:4-37) or the "Handwriting on the Wall" (Dan 5:1-31), only a single fulfillment is indicated. These evidences from within the book of Daniel provide sure guidelines for the fulfillment of the visions that reach into the distant future to the eschaton at the end of time.

Conclusion

This investigation into the matter of fulfillment of prophecy has been guided by explicit fulfillments noted in Scripture. We have applied a pragmatic test by examining the historical fulfillments of the specifications required by the biblical predictions. The representative samples investigated have led to the conclusion that usually there is but one fulfillment to a prophecy.

Dual, or twofold, fulfillment may be present in some biblical predictions where contextual scriptural indications make this clear, and when the details of the specifications are met in each instance. On the other hand, apocalyptic prophecy, as found in the books of Daniel and Revelation, has but one fulfillment for each symbol.

CHAPTER X

Theological Importance of the Preadvent Judgment

William H. Shea

Editorial synopsis. Far from being a museum piece of pioneer theology to be relegated to books of Adventist history, the biblical teaching of the preadvent, investigative phase of the final judgment is of vital importance to the believer today. It is a concluding portion of salvation history and is an integral component of the Adventist message of warning and invitation which the church is commissioned to preach "to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people."

In this chapter the author elaborates on 12 significant propositions concerning this second phase of Christ's priestly ministry in the heavenly sanctuary, ongoing since 1844:

- 1. The preadvent judgment is a present activity of God.
- 2. The preadvent judgment constitutes a major turning point or juncture in the history of salvation.
- 3. The preadvent judgment demarcates the "time of the end" from the end of time.
- 4. The preadvent judgment occupies the first of three great phases of God's final work of judgment that will end with the establishment of His eternal kingdom.
- 5. The preadvent judgment focuses on Christ and says something about Him at its climax.
- 6. The preadvent judgment says something about the wicked and their fate.
- 7. The preadvent judgment says something about the righteous and their destiny.
- 8. The preadvent judgment provides an answer to the problem of the current state of the righteous dead.
- 9. The preadvent judgment provides a demonstration of the character of God.
- 10. The preadvent judgment provides a logical conclusion to the first phase of Christ's priestly ministration in heaven.
- 11. The preadvent judgment places a strong emphasis upon the ethical demands of the gospel.
- 12. The preadvent judgment emphasizes our responsibility to observe all of God's commandments, including the observance of the Sabbath.

Introduction

In a number of recent studies, both in the DRC volumes and elsewhere, Seventh-day Adventist scholars have reaffirmed the biblical basis for the teaching that a judgment is conducted in heaven prior to the time that Christ will return to the earth. Because this judgment occurs prior to the second advent of Christ, it is known as the preadvent judgment. Because records in heaven are examined during this judgment, it is known as the investigative judgment. One of these titles refers to its time; the other refers to its nature.

Since recent studies have determined that the foundation for this teaching is based soundly in Scripture, it is not necessary to cite the different lines of evidence examined in those studies. That conclusion can be accepted as the starting point for the particular emphasis placed upon that judgment here: its theological importance.

There are some things taught in Scripture, such as those about the factual nature of some historical event in the past, which do not seem to be especially important to Christians today. Should the biblical teaching about the preadvent judgment be relegated to that lower level of importance? Is this doctrine, for example, just a theological position inherited from the pioneers of the Seventh-day Adventist Church which no longer holds for this present generation the importance that it did for them?

A number of reasons are listed below to explain why this teaching still is of great importance to the church and the individual Christian today. These reasons are listed as individual propositions, and a brief discussion of the point made by each proposition follows. This list is not intended to be exhaustive; it is intended only to be representative of biblical thought on this subject.

1. The preadvent judgment is a present activity of God. The correct applications determined for the great time prophecies of Daniel and Revelation indicate that we are now living in what is known by them as the "time of the end." It is in the "time of the end," but prior to the second advent of Christ, that this work of judgment is to be taken up in heaven. Since we are now living in that prophetically demarcated time, it means judgment is going on at the present time in heaven.

Of all the things that Christians should be interested in knowing about God, one of the most important concerns what He is doing now. As a present activity of God, therefore, this preadvent judgment should be a subject of great interest for the contemporary Christian.

2. The preadvent judgment constitutes a major turning point or juncture in the history of salvation. In the vision of Daniel 7 the prophet is shown the rise and fall of a series of major kingdoms in earthly human history and the career of a religious-political entity. After having seen the activity of the last of these powers, the prophet's attention is directed to the court of heaven in which he sees the Ancient of Days and the heavenly hosts begin to engage in the activity of final judgment.

As a result of that judgment an entirely new order of human history opens up, an order that extends into an eternity in God's great kingdom. The judgment which Daniel sees in vision, therefore, stands at the juncture between the present order of human existence and the eternal order that will follow.

3. The preadvent judgment demarcates the "time of the end" from the end of time. The "time of the end" is known from Daniel's prophecies as a time period during which several events will occur. People will search the scroll of Daniel then, the king of the north will do certain things then, etc. The most prominent of the events to occur in the "time of the end" is the judgment in heaven.

When the judgment concludes, the "time of the end", during which it was in session, will come to a close. When that occurs God will set up His own eternal kingdom. Human history as we now know it will come to a close. That is the end of time. Thus the "time of the end" begins approximately when the preadvent judgment begins, and the end of time comes when it concludes.

4. The preadvent judgment occupies the first of three great phases of God's final work of judgment that will end with the establishment of His eternal kingdom. The preadvent judgment described in Daniel is not the only judgment of cosmic scope that is known to us from the Bible. It is followed by the judgment conducted in heaven by Christ and His saints during the millennium (Rev 20:4–6; 1 Cor 6:2–3). A third judgment is to be carried out before the great white throne of God at the end of the millennium (Rev 20:11–15). Since these three judgment scenes flow from one into another in an uninterrupted succession, they can be thought of as three phases of the same work of final judgment. With the third and last of these phases the plan of salvation is brought to a close.

Each of the phases of the final judgment has its own special object of attention. In the preadvent judgment phase the final account is summed up of all the saints of all ages who will enter God's eternal kingdom. During the millennial judgment phase those saints will judge or evaluate the records of those who were not accepted into that kingdom. Then at the end of the millenium, in the third executive phase, the final verdict on the wicked will be rendered to them and the righteous will be admitted to their final reward.

Thus all three of these phases of final judgment can be seen as complementary. The preadvent judgment commences this sequence that will end with the judgment scene from which the righteous go forth to take possession of the earth made new.

5. The preadvent judgment focuses on Christ and says something about Him at its climax. According to the description of the vision in Daniel 7 the prophet sees two different scenes from this judgment. In the first view he is shown the commencement of the work of judgment in the court scene presided over by the Ancient of Days, God the Father.

The conclusion to the judgment is shown to the prophet in a second scene. In that concluding scene the Son of man, Jesus Christ, is awarded final rulership over all the earth and its inhabitants. The great climax to this judgment is thus shown to the prophet, and at its center it focuses on Jesus Christ.

This does not mean of course, that Christ has had to wait until the final judgment to find out whether or not He is going to rule over the eternal kingdom. Instead, the work of review and summary conducted through the course of this

judgment results in one great and final reaffirmation of all that He has accomplished through the plan of salvation. In the same way this judgment represents a summary and affirmation of the salvation that individual saints have obtained previously through their relationship to Christ.

6. The preadvent judgment says something about the wicked and their fate. The corporate entity of those especially opposed to God is represented in the prophecies of Daniel 7 and 8 under the symbol of the little horn. Even these

who share the fate of the little horn can be assured of receiving sentence from a just God, however. The decisions reached in their cases are not the result of an arbitrary act on His part. Rather, they will result from an examination of their own records. This examination is not conducted in secret; it is carried out with the angelic host looking on as witnesses.

7. The preadvent judgment says something about the righteous and their destiny. An event which immediately follows the conclusion of this judgment is the entrance of the saints of the Most High into His eternal kingdom. Given this close relationship, these two events should be seen as cause and effect. Thus, it is evident that one of the functions of this judgment is to serve as a final review to sum up the total membership of the saints of all ages who may, through God's grace, enter that kingdom. The records of heaven attest that God is acting in a just and righteous manner to receive these saints into His kingdom.

From time to time some of these saints have been adjudged guilty of various crimes by earthly tribunals when actually they were serving God and man faithfully. In the preadvent judgment these unjust sentences by earthly courts will

be reversed by the court of heaven. In this way God will vindicate His saints. Daniel 7:22 refers to this fact by indicating that the heavenly court will give judgment "for" (on behalf of, in favor of) the saints. In order to render the more accurate verdict the court of heaven obviously must be better acquainted with the lives and cases of the individual saints than were their earthly persecutors and prosecutors like the little horn.

In considering such a course of action it is well to keep in mind that if God is for His people, no one can offer any significant opposition to them (Rom 8:31–39). As a part of the plan of salvation the object of this judgment is to save as

many as possible, not to exclude as many as possible. The false follower who is not genuinely in union with God understandably will have to be rejected in this judgment (Exod 32:33; Matt 22:10–14). But the desire on the part of God to save is represented graciously in the appeal given through His prophet: "Turn back, turn back from your evil ways, for why will you die ...?" (Ezek 33:11, RSV).

A beautiful illustration of this work of mercy, grace, and justification is given to us in the vision which dealt with Joshua the high priest in the time of Zechariah (Zech 3). This case is set in the sanctuary, and it involves a decision or

judgment on the part of God in behalf of the priest. The angel of the Lord orders, "'Remove the filthy garments from him.'" And he assures the penitent Joshua, "'Behold, I have taken your iniquity away from you, and I will clothe you in rich apparel'" (Zech 3:4, RSV).

8. The preadvent judgment provides an answer to the problem of the current state of the righteous dead. According to a correct biblical understanding of the nature of man, he is mortal. He is not naturally immortal. When he dies he sleeps in the grave. This means that the righteous dead of all ages are still sleeping in their graves, and the final solution to their problem in this state has yet to be carried out.

When Christ comes again He will awaken His sleeping saints and bestow upon them their just rewards. Thus rewards are determined before He comes. An appropriate occasion upon which to make such a final determination is when they are reviewed in the preadvent judgment.

It has been difficult for non-Adventists to understand the preadvent judgment teaching held by the Adventist Church. A major reason for this lack of understanding derives from their presupposition about the nature of man. When one espouses the view that man is naturally immortal, the point at which judgment upon the individual's life takes place is at his death. At that time he is awarded a future life in either heaven or hell.

Consequently, an end-time preadvent judgment, such as is brought to view in the Bible, cannot be reconciled with the presupposition about man's immortality. But, if on the other hand the matter is viewed from the biblical perspective of the nature of man, this preadvent judgment is a natural and logical consequence or requirement of that better understanding of the Bible.

9. The preadvent judgment provides a demonstration of the character of God. Eventually, by virtue of the way He conducts this preadvent judgment, the righteousness, justice, and mercy of God will be proclaimed by all earthly and heavenly intelligences (Isa 45:23; Rom 3:26; 14:10–11; Phil 2:10–11; Rev 15:3–4; 16:5, 7; 19:2, 11). In this way the loving character of God, which has been in dispute through the controversy with Satan (Rev 12:7–9), will be vindicated. This ultimate vindication of God can give us a present confidence in the kind of Judge and Advocate we now have in the heavenly court.

10. The preadvent judgment provides a logical conclusion to the first phase of Christ's priestly ministration in heaven. God's plan of redemption has been in operation since the fall of man. During this period of its operation it has accomplished great results. It is only natural and logical, therefore, that the cumulative achievements of the plan of redemption should be demonstrated as it is concluded. The preadvent judgment offers the opportunity for just such a demonstration. This demonstration is accomplished by providing a review and summary of those accomplishments before the loyal, unfallen intelligencies of the universe. It is thus a logical conclusion to it.

A parallel can be drawn here with the course of ministration in the ancient tabernacle/temple sanctuary of the Hebrews. During the course of the cultic year a round of sacrifices was carried on. These served the purpose of making atonement or providing reconciliation between the sinner and God. This round of ceremonies culminated in the services conducted on the Day of Atonement.

The services on the Day of Atonement served two main purposes as far as the people were concerned: (1) They accomplished the final atonement for all of their sins which had been confessed, repented of, and sacrificed for through the course of the year. And (2) it served as a day of judgment for unrepentant and stiff-necked sinners. They were to be cut off from the camp. (The Day of Atonement also served to purify the sanctuary and its equipment to prepare it for the next year's round of services.) Thus this cultic day of judgment served as a fitting conclusion to the round of ministry that went on in the camp and sanctuary throughout the year.

In the same way the preadvent judgment can be looked upon as a final phase in Christ's heavenly ministration. That ministry of reconciliation and intercession began at His ascension (Heb 8–9). It also served as the validation of what had been accomplished through the services of the earthly temple and tabernacle in OT times (Heb 9:15). With the preadvent judgment the time has come for the final summary and accounting of what has been accomplished by this ministry. It serves, therefore, as a fitting conclusion to it.

It should be noted here in passing that just because Christ entered upon this second phase of His ministry in 1844, it does not mean that He has ceased to perform the functions of the first phase. Salvation is still available to repentant

sinners. On the basis of the ancient parallel in the types one can say that in the antitypical Day of Atonement both phases of Christ's ministry in the heavenly sanctuary-intercession and judgment—can be and are carried on at the same time while human probation lasts.

11. The preadvent judgment places a strong emphasis upon the ethical demands of the gospel. To be living in such a time, when this judgment is transpiring in heaven, is a sobering thought. It should have an effect upon the way the people of God live, not in terms of efforts to demonstrate righteousness from our own works, but in terms of a deep and abiding faith in God who justifies and sanctifies us and enables us to do His work in the world.

The knowledge that we are living in such a solemn time is thus a call to: (1) worship the true God and reject the worship of all that is false (Rev 14:6–14), (2) receive the gospel or good news of salvation through Jesus Christ and to exercise saving faith in Him (Acts 4:12), (3) live the sanctified life through the power of the Holy Spirit (1 Thess 5:23), and (4) witness to one's neighbors and the world at large about the character of God, what the plan of redemption has accomplished, and the responsibilities of the individual Christian toward God (Matt 28:19).

With the gospel comes a call to holy living (Matt 5-7). Christians cannot, therefore, continue in complacent living, because all are accountable before God. This accountability is emphasized by the judgment that is going on in heaven at present. By locating this judgment in a prophetic framework, and localizing this part of that framework to our own time, Christ has placed a particular sense of urgency in His call to mission by His people at this time.

12. The preadvent judgment emphasizes our responsibility to observe all of God's commandments, including the observe the ethical demands of the gospel in this prophetic time

cannot be separated from His charge to keep His commandments because we love Him. To conduct a judgment some sort of standard must be observed as the rule for judgment. For God this is His law, the Ten Commandments (Jas 2:9–12). The function of the final judgment naturally calls attention to a much neglected aspect of the Ten Commandments, the call to observe the seventh-day Sabbath of the fourth precept. In the same "time of the end" in which the prophecies of Daniel and Revelation locate the preadvent judgment will be found on earth a people who express their loyalty to God by observing all His commandments (Rev 12:17; 14:12).

This is a prophetic time when men and women are called especially to worship God as their Creator (Rev 14:6-7). The most directly appropriate way to worship God as Creator is to worship Him on the day He set aside, sanctified, and blessed as a memorial of His creation, the seventh-day Sabbath (Gen 2:2-3).

A prophetic link between the Sabbath and the preadvent judgment can thus be forged. This link calls mankind to the observance of the Sabbath as a present truth about their Creator and Redeemer.

CHAPTER XI

An Alternative to Humanism

Siegfried J. Schwantes

Editorial synopsis. The emphasis on humanism in modern society, developing as a by-product of the Renaissance, together with the striking advancements of science and technology, has given rise to man-centered theologies in the West and an ever-diminishing role for God.

The recovery of the doctrine of the heavenly sanctuary in the nineteenth century providentially redresses this imbalance. It redirects human attention back to God—"Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come" (Rev 14:6)—by pointing to Christ's priestly ministry in heaven where human destiny will be decided.

The biblical doctrine of Christ's priestly ministry both in intercession and judgment underscores anew the heavenly dimension in God's plan to redeem sinners. The doctrine of the sanctuary is a timely reminder that the ultimate decisions relating to salvation are made in heaven, not on earth.

Tourists in Europe are fond of visiting the medieval cathedrals that rise skyward in many cities. The towers of these gothic structures, as in Cologne or Strassburg, with their spirals and stained-glass windows, speak of the human aspiration for communion with heaven.

When we realize that some of these cathedrals required one or two centuries of patient and loving labor, we can understand better how much heaven and its glory filled the builders' imagination. These structures, representing the quintessence of the artistic abilities of thousands of anonymous workers, render mute testimony to the otherworldliness of an age that knew little of the comforts of life.

Many of these cathedrals today stand empty and dilapidated, clear evidence of a change in European values since the fourteenth century. That century marked the dawning of the Renaissance and humanism that turned attention to man as the chief actor on the stage of history. Heaven and eternity soon were relegated to a secondary plane, while man and his earthly happiness became the focus of attention.

If the humanistic movement's positive aspects were a wholesome reaction against an overwhelming preoccupation with the beyond, it also had its negative effects. If it drew attention to the beauty of the world in which we live and to our task of improving our lot, it also dimmed interest in the life beyond.

We cannot escape current ideologies, anymore than we can escape the air we breathe. Theologians are no more immune than others; consequently the Reformers suffered under the influence of this humanistic ideology gaining currency everywhere. Humanistic bias marked even the thinking of Luther and Calvin.

Under the guidance of the Spirit, the Reformers recovered precious Bible truths that lay forgotten during the Middle Ages, among them the doctrine of justification by faith. But in the intellectual climate of the sixteenth century the Reformers were not prepared to appreciate the doctrine of the heavenly sanctuary. The times were not favorable for theologians to see the Scripture passages on this topic in the proper light.

In contrast with the man-centered theology current in the West since the Renaissance, stands the biblical teaching that no phase in the experience of salvation is merely an earthly affair. Jesus makes it clear that religious experiences such as repentance, confession, and forgiveness have repercussions in heaven.

Consider repentance, which would seem to be merely a subjective experience taking place in the heart. Jesus concluded the parable of the lost coin by saying, "I tell you, there is joy before the angels of God over one sinner who repents" (Luke 15:10). Even though repentance wells up from the depths of the heart, it is not self-generated, but a response to God's love. The goodness of God leads us to repentance (Rom 2:4). Divine compassion evokes a response in the heart, but that response has no saving value unless ratified by Heaven.

What is true of repentance is even more evident with confession, the audible expression of repentance. Proceeding from the bottom of his heart, the humble confession of the tax collector found a joyful echo in heaven. "I tell you," said Jesus, "this man went down to his house justified rather than the other" (Luke 18:14).

Confession Registered in Heaven

Confession unrelated to sin, that is, public confession of faith in Christ, likewise has repercussions in heaven. "So every one who acknowledges me before men, I also will acknowledge before my Father who is in heaven" (Matt 10:32). More accurately than in any earthly computer, every sincere confession is registered in the books of heaven.

Is forgiveness of sin merely an earthly transaction? "Whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven" (chap. 16:19). Forgiveness, like repentance, has no saving value unless it is sealed in heaven. The church may forgive; the offended person may forgive; but unless God forgives, that sin shall witness against the sinner in the final judgment. Thus, pardon is never merely an earthly affair.

Given these considerations, it should be clear why the doctrine of the heavenly sanctuary is timely. It obliges theologians to take seriously the heavenly dimension of God's redemption. The initiative in the work of saving the lost, as the parables of the lost sheep and the lost coin show, belongs to God and not to man. Divine love reaches down from heaven to redeem us from our hopeless predicament.

The doctrine of the heavenly sanctuary reminds one that the ultimate decisions relating to salvation are made in heaven, not on earth. Far from inviting self-pitying introspection, the Scriptures encourage us to look to heaven where God waits to show grace. "Turn to me and be saved, all the ends of the earth!" (Isa 45:22). The author of Hebrews exhorted believers whose attention still centered on the earthly sanctuary to look heavenward: "Now the point in what we are saying is this: we have such a high priest, one who is seated at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in heaven" (Heb 8:1). Those living this side of the cross should fix their eyes upon Jesus Christ, our heavenly mediator.

In the heavenly sanctuary Christ performs at present His priestly ministry in our behalf, a ministry as vital for salvation as His earthly ministry culminating with His death on Calvary. Without the Incarnation and Christ's blood shed on the cross, there could be no heavenly ministry, since a priest must have something to offer (vs. 3). And without the heavenly mediation of Christ, sinners could derive no benefit from Christ's sacrifice. There would be no link connecting what was done on Calvary with the need of pardon and reconciliation here and now (chap. 7:25).

This intercession proves to unfallen heavenly intelligences that God is righteous, while He "justifies him who has faith in Jesus" (Rom 3:26). In heaven's august tribunal, attended by a multitude of angelic witnesses, God's righteous judgment must be above every suspicion. When the last case shall be examined, and the sentence pronounced for life or death, a myriad of voices will proclaim: "Great and wonderful are thy deeds, O Lord God the Almighty! Just and true are thy ways, O King of the Ages!" (Rev 15:3).

Only those oblivious to the questions at stake minimize the relevance of what goes on in heaven. While our salvation is important, it is even more important to demonstrate God's righteousness before the universe. Begun at the cross, this demonstration will not be ended until the heavenly court has pronounced the last sentence.

The doctrine of the heavenly sanctuary comes as a timely antidote to neutralize the humanistic bias in modern theological thought. The fact that this bias is as old as the Reformation does not make it less dangerous. The focus of attention, for so long on humans and their sin, will at last be upon God, the Alpha and Omega of the plan of redemption. For the Reformers the statement of Habakkuk 2:4, "The righteous shall live by his faith," seemed to comprise the whole gospel. Though this declaration must retain its full value, it is but a partial expression of the gospel. By its side should stand Habakkuk 2:20 as a counterweight: "The Lord is in his holy temple; let all the earth keep silence before him."

Even though the humanistic emphasis was necessary after centuries of medieval otherworldliness, it does not represent the last word in man's search for truth. If the human dimension of salvation was neglected by the scholastic theologians, the pendulum swung to the opposite extreme with the humanistic reaction, when the heavenly dimension of redemption became equally neglected. Recovery of the doctrine of the heavenly sanctuary in the nineteenth century providentially redressed the balance, redirecting attention to Christ's ministry in heaven, where human destiny will be decided.

Emphasis on Heavenly Dimension

That God in His providence willed the new emphasis on the heavenly dimension of salvation may be seen in the message of the first angel of Revelation 14: "Fear God and give him glory, for the hour of his judgment has come" (vs. 7). The temptation since the Renaissance, and even more since the scientific revolution, has been to glorify human accomplishments to the neglect of God, to whom scientists and philosophers give an ever-diminishing role.

That we should aspire to ever greater mastery over the earth and its resources was part of the divine plan since Creation (see Gen 1:26-28). But man acted presumptuously in allowing this inebriation with science and technology to blind him to his dependence on God.

The connection between the first angel's message and the doctrine of the heavenly sanctuary may be seen by the announcement that the hour of His judgment has come. In Revelation the final judgment is often associated with the temple in heaven. "The time for the dead to be judged" (chap. 11:18), precedes the announcement "Then God's temple in heaven was opened, and the ark of his covenant was seen within his temple" (vs. 19). The ark of the covenant in the earthly sanctuary contained the tables of the Decalogue (Deut 10:5), and upon it the ceremony of the Day of Atonement was centered (Lev 16:15, 16). Thus the judgment involves the Decalogue, and the Decalogue relates to the ark of the most holy place.

The judgment becomes the final stage in the eradication of sin from the universe; so the Day of Atonement clarifies the relationship between the sanctuary and the judgment. The ceremonies detailed in Leviticus 16 may be regarded as the judicial capstone of the religious year. In the ceremonial cycle of 12 months were typified various aspects of reconciling man to God. The Day of Atonement cleansed the sanctuary and the people from the accumulated sins of the year. Those who lost their faith in God's forgiveness had their sins retained and were excluded from the religious life of the community. For Israel this day became identified with the day of judgment, since their eternal destiny depended on their acceptance by God on that day. The sanctuary could not fail to be associated with the final judgment in their minds.

In this day of pseudogospels founded upon humanistic premises, the doctrine of the heavenly sanctuary comes as a timely reminder that salvation derives from God alone. Every step in the process of reconciling us to God has its repercussions in heaven.

CHAPTER XII*

Justification and Judgment

Ivan T. Blazen

JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH/JUDGMENT ACCORDING TO WORKS

Editorial synopsis. In this and the following section the author examines two biblical doctrines especially emphasized by the apostle Paul: (1) ustification by faith, and (2) jjudgment according to works. A variety of explanations have been offered by Bible students to reconcile what appears as a tension between these two doctrinal positions of the Christian faith.

Some argue that the concept of final judgment is a leftover from Paul's Judaism and is irrelevant for Christians. Others suggest that NT judgment passages are designed only to prompt the sinner to turn to Christ for justification, but have no further significance for believers. Some teach that the sinner is justified initially by faith but ultimately by his attainment through grace of the standard of perfection. And still others see the judgment so far as professed believers are concerned as unrelated to their salvation or loss but only as an assignment of rewards among God's people.

None of these views, however, give full value to these two scriptural teachings. Since they are topics of inspired revelation, neither doctrine can be minimized or weakened in favor of the other.

The author's resolution of these two truths may be termed "the dynamic, salvation-historical view." It stresses the "already" of salvation begun in the here and now and the "not yet" of salvation completed. The essence of this view is that there is only one justification. It accompanies the believer from the time of faith's inception (the "already") all the way into the final judgment where its reality and vitality are tested and attested by its fruits (the "not yet"). At the end—the judgment—God asks for justification with its fruit. He does not ask this in the sense of the formula—"faith plus works saves"—but in the sense that justification is the source of sanctified fruit.

Although the blessing of acquital in the future judgment becomes operative even now, Scripture is clear that what God desires to see in the final judgment is justified believers who through His grace have entered into genuine union with Him and have borne fruit to His glory.

Section Outline

- I. Introduction
- II. Reason and Revelation
- III. Justification by Faith and Judgment According to Works
- IV. Justification and Assurance
- V. Judgment and Assurance
- VI. A Tension Resolved

Introduction

This study seeks to clarify the relationship between justification by faith alone, which brings assurance of salvation, and judgment according to works. Varied attempts have been made to resolve what was seen as a tension or contradiction between these two doctrines. Often these attempts have taken the form of minimizing or negating one or the other of these teachings. It is my contention that both are to be maintained strongly, for Scripture teaches both, and that there is an inner unity between them, like the unity that exists between Christ as Saviour and Christ as Lord.

Since so much of the discussion on justification and judgment is carried on with respect to the thought of the apostle Paul, my attention will be focused there. However, there is reference to other passages and to certain statements in the Spirit of Prophecy.

As a presupposition for the discussion, this study first considers the relation between reason and revelation. It continues by discussing in turn the occurrence and significance in Paul of (1) justification by faith apart from works and (2) judgment according to works. This leads us to an evaluation of various attempts to harmonize the two doctrines. Then we shall examine the relation between Christ as Saviour and Christ as Lord, between the gift of God and the claim of God (section 2). Our objective is to place the discussion of the relation between justification and judgment in a new key. The study concludes with an application of the discussion to Seventh-day Adventist teaching on the judgment and with a consideration of aspects of the judgment in the theology of John.

Reason and Revelation

At the outset it is necessary, on the basis of Scripture, to deal with a fallacious way of reasoning that mistreats the data of divine revelation. Such reasoning if unchallenged and allowed to stand would make impossible a biblically balanced resolution to the relationship between justification and the judgment.

A text appropriate to this discussion, one germane to the thematic concerns of this study, is Romans 3:1–8. In this passage Paul is carrying on a debate with Judaism over the subject of the faithfulness of God. In Romans 1 and 2 Paul has shown that human beings have been unfaithful to God. All people alike, not only Gentiles but also Jews, many of whom have condemned the Gentiles, are sinners before God, under His judgment (Rom 2:2), and liable to His wrath. The question becomes—and it has special relevance with regard to the Jew, who was a recipient of the oracles of God (Rom 3:1–2)—Does not human unfaithfulness cancel the faithfulness of God (vs. 3)? This is to say, Does not human sin, and in particular Jewish sin, make of no effect the promises of God? Paul's answer to this is a resounding No! God is true, though every human being is false. He prevails when He is judged concerning His word and faithfulness (vs. 4).

With this the question takes a new direction, an opposite twist. The question no longer concerns the maintenance of God's faithfulness—that is now presumed to be true—but the maintenance of human unfaithfulness. The issue now is not about man's judgment upon God, but about God's judgment upon man. If the divine faithfulness cannot be canceled, should not human unfaithfulness be canceled as something liable to the judgment? If God's faithfulness remains, even though every person has been unfaithful, then perhaps human unfaithfulness is not undesirable, in any case not really punishable, for such unfaithfulness only throws into bold relief the faithfulness of God. Would not God be unjust to inflict wrath upon (vs. 5) or judge as a sinner one whose lie has caused God's truth to abound to His glory (vs. 7)? In fact, is it not a commendable course to do wrong "that good may come" (vs. 8)? The "good" in such a case probably refers first to the favorable light in which human badness places God's goodness, and second to the good, or grace, that comes from God to human beings who have sinned (see Romans 5:20 and 6:1).

This kind of argumentation was designed, by those who employed it, to discredit Paul's doctrine of the justification of the ungodly by showing that it would lead to a perpetuation of, even an invitation to, sin rather than its demise.

Paul Responds

Paul responds by saying that if the reasoning referred to of letting sinful humans off the hook were valid, "then how could God judge the world?" (Rom 3:6). By this question Paul negates the logic of his opponents, not by a discussion—this will come in Romans 6 after Paul has fully developed his view of justification by faith (Rom 3:21-4:25) and its consequences (Rom 5)—but by an appeal to a dogmatic datum of divine revelation—God will judge the world.

If this is true, as both he and his Jewish opponents believed, then no kind of reasoning that would minimize or do away with this judgment could be valid. Divine revelation supersedes ordinary human logic. (Note how the Jewish objection presented in Romans 3:5 is accompanied by Paul's comment: "I speak in a human way.")

Reason must function as the servant of revelation. It is revelation that enlightens reason, and thus it is reason's task to explicate revelation, not contradict it. Once the reality of the judgment is established on the basis of revelation, reason must operate to explain its significance, not to lessen or destroy its import.

Justification by Faith and Judgment According to Works

Two elements inherent in Romans 3:1–8 emerge clearly. First, God is faithful, that is, He keeps His promises to human beings, even though they have broken their promises to Him (vss. 1–4). Second, there is no excuse in God's faithfulness for human sin, no encouragement to its continuance (vss. 5–8). These two points may seem to be in tension with each other, but for Paul they exist in unity and must be said together. Paul will develop the first point in his teaching on God's justification of the ungodly by faith, and the second point in terms of his teaching on judgment according to works.

These two elements are pillars in Paul's theology. For Paul they stand together, each helping to explain the full significance of the other and to guard the other from misunderstandings and false deductions.

Justification by faith helps to guard the judgment from the false ideas that human beings never will be able to stand in God's judgment or that standing there self-goodness will place God's righteousness under obligation. In other words, justification contradicts the concept that humans cannot make it in the judgment or that they make it by themselves.

On the other hand, judgment according to works guards the doctrine of the justification of the *ungodly* from meaning the justification of *ungodliness*. If there is a judgment according to works, then justification must mean that the lives of the justified are claimed by Christ and that they are called to live for Him who died for them (2 Cor 5:14-15).

When either of these pillars is weakened or removed by the desire for a quick, easy unity of thought, we end up, not with a half-truth, but with no truth. In terms of the actual data of Scripture, it is a fiction to believe that justification does not relate us to the rule of Christ as Lord or that the judgment does not relate us to the work of Christ as Saviour.

Paul became very angry with those who attempted in any way, either by thought or deed, to move either of these pillars. As we see from Galatians 1:8–9 and Romans 3:8, those who advocated either position—working for justification or the justified not working—were alike condemned by Paul in strong language. If, as Hebrews says, "it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God" (Heb 10:31) one also can be sure that it was a fearful thing to fall into the hands of God's servant, the living and often livid Paul!

Since both justification by faith and judgment according to works are elements of divine revelation, it belongs to Christian reason to accept both, to proclaim both, to interpret both, and to seek to correlate both. One teaching should not be made to yield to the other so that its inner essence and unique contribution are denied.

While only a brief suggestion can be made here, I would affirm that the need for and the unity between justification and the judgment are not to be sought in some formal, deductive logic, but are connected with salvation-history. To speak of justification and the judgment is to speak about realities that exist in the continuity of salvation-history.

speak of justification and the judgment is to speak about realities that exist in the continuity of salvation-history.

Only in the framework of the unfolding drama of God's salvation, as revealed in Scripture, can justification and the judgment be evaluated rightly. Isolated from salvation-history and made the objects of logical debate, justification

It belongs to Christian reason to assess the place and function that justification and judgment have in the revealed flow of God's redemptive plan. According to that plan, God came to earth in the person of Jesus Christ, His Son, and offered justification, a right relation with Himself, to all who would place their faith in the crucified, risen Christ. Those whom God justified through Jesus Christ He called to witness to Jesus Christ in word and deed until the consummation of all things. When the end comes, the judgment assesses and testifies to the reality of justification evidenced by the faithful witness of God's people. In this flow, justification and the judgment do not stand in the relation of tension or contradiction, but in that of inauguration and consummation.

God's plan has run its full course when His people, the justified, stand before Him at the end of time with the fruit of their personal (ethical) and evangelistic labor in the power of the Spirit. To be without fruit is to be not a part of, but apart from, God's redemptive process in this world.

The point I am making about the relation between justification's and the judgment's being that of the relation between inauguration and consummation finds elements of support in Philippians 1:5—11. Paul says that he is "thankful for your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now. And I am sure that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ. It is right for me to feel thus about you ..., for you are all partakers with me of grace.... And it is my prayer that your love may abound more and more, with knowledge and all discernment, so that you may approve what is excellent, and may be pure and blameless for the day of Christ, filled with the fruits of righteousness which come through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God."

I would affirm that the rubrics and content of our theology must be large enough to accommodate all the data of divine revelation. In this regard justification and judgment should be conceived as integral elements of the ongoing movement of salvation-history. Neither must be weakened or rejected. Both must be accepted and integrated. These pillars must stand together, supporting the edifice of God's redemptive purpose and activity.

Justification and Assurance

Justification is by faith, apart from works. This is asserted so frequently by Paul that it is not necessary to give a catalog of texts. Galatians 2:16 alone makes the point several times. Two texts, however, are worth special mention because they supply the rationale and perspective from which Paul's many assertions are made. I refer to Galatians 2:21 and Romans 3:27.

On the basis of these texts, if Paul were asked how he knew that justification could not be by works, his first reply would not be, "Because the works of humans have been evil," though in fact Paul is capable of painting a very dark picture of the universal sinfulness of human actions, as he does in Romans 1:18–3:20. Rather, his primary reply would be given in the terms of Galatians 2:21.

Paul's logic in this text is Christological and runs like this: "If righteousness were through the law, then Christ died for nothing." Implied: "But it is inconceivable that Christ died for nothing; He died to save. Therefore, righteousness cannot be by the law." In other words, righteousness cannot come by works of the law because revelation indicates and faith confesses that righteousness comes from Christ.

The same basic point is registered in Romans 3:27. When Paul denies that works exclude boasting, this is not the argument we would expect, having read the story of mankind's evil works in Romans 1:18–3:20. But then Romans 3:21–26, which emphasizes the manifestation of God's grace and righteousness at the cross, comes before the question posed in verse 27. Paul answers that what ultimately excludes boasting is not the presence of evil deeds, but faith in Christ's atoning deed. The teaching that righteousness is not by works is therefore a Christological deduction.

Having made this observation, we may find it of some value to summarize some of the main elements in Paul's understanding of justification. Romans, with other related texts, supplies the best guide.

Over against the sordid specter of human unrighteousness described in Romans 1:18–3:20, with all mankind "under the power of sin" (Rom 3:9), every mouth stopped, and the whole world guilty before the judgment bar of God (vs. 19), the righteousness of God (His redemptive activity whereby He restores human beings to a right relation with Himself), which leads to salvation, is being revealed through the proclamation of the gospel (see chapter 1:16) and is effective for faith and *faith alone* (the significance of "from faith to faith" [vs. 17, KJV]).

What is announced in verses 16 and 17 is developed more fully in Romans 3:21–26. The righteousness of God that is being revealed or offered personally in the gospel (Rom 1:17) was revealed (Rom 3:21) historically in the blood sacrifice of Christ on the cross (vs. 25). Human beings, all of whom have sinned and hence are short of God's glory (vs. 23), are justified (put right with God, "rightified") by God's grace through the redemption (liberation or freedom from sin) effected by Christ's sacrifice (vss. 24–25). This justifying activity of God creates a new "now" for believers (vs. 21), which stands over against the old eon of sin and death (Rom 1:18–3:20).

The understanding of the nature of justification is clarified in other sections of Romans. Romans 5:16, 18 and 8:33–34 are of help, for here justification is contrasted with condemnation (see 2 Cor 3:9) and the bringing of charges against God's elect. It is clear—God's justification of the sinner means that his condemnation is removed and all charges against him are dropped. This happens because God is "for us," not "against us," as evidenced by the fact that "he ... did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all" (Rom 8:31–32).

This significance for justification is in accord with what is revealed in Romans 4:1–8, probably the most important passage for understanding justification. Here, after showing what Abraham did not find, that is, a reason to boast before God because of justification by works (vs. 2), Paul shows, by his usage of Genesis 15:6, what in fact Abraham did find, namely a reckoning of righteousness on the basis of faith.

What this reckoning involves is expanded in Romans 4:6–8 by the application of Rabbi Hillel's second principle of biblical interpretation, gezerah shawah ("equivalency of expressions"). According to this principle, a word or phrase found in one text of Scripture may be explained by the meaning it bears in another biblical text. Since the word reckon appears not only in Genesis 15:6 but also in Psalm 32:2, Paul, in good rabbinic fashion, but in harmony with the gospel, uses the latter text to illumine the former. When this is done, justification, or the reckoning of righteousness, comes to mean the forgiveness of sin or what amounts to the same thing, the covering of sin or its nonreckoning to the believer (with the latter idea see 2 Corinthians 5:19). Forgiveness, full and free—this is justification. The reality of it is so marvelous that the one who has experienced it is called "blessed," or happy (Rom 4:7).

In Romans 5:9–10, two verses parallel each other, justification is coordinated with reconciliation. Both terms refer to the same reality and are made possible in the same way—through the death of Christ—and lead to the same result—final salvation. The synonymity between justification and reconciliation is seen also in 2 Corinthians 5:18–21, where reconciliation is tied together with the nonreckoning of sin, as in Romans 4:8, and with the righteousness of God. Interestingly, these concepts are in turn related to that of the new creation spoken of in 2 Corinthians 5:17. The idea of the new creation is also found in Romans 4:17, where God, who justifies, is described as one "who gives life to the dead and calls into existence the things that do not exist."

Generally when the concept of the new creation is introduced, people think first in terms of sanctification, in the sense of moral growth. But, as we see from 2 Corinthians 5 and Romans 4, the new creation is related most immediately to justification and reconciliation. However, as 2 Corinthians 5:14–15 shows, the purpose of Christ's reconciling death is that those who live as a result of it might live no longer for themselves, but for Him who died and rose again. The new creation involves no bifurcation between the new life granted and the new life lived.

There are other concepts and realities that shed light on justification. As Paul argues his case for justification in Galatians he comes to the place where he explains the new situation created by the justifying activity of God in terms of adoption or sonship (Gal 4:5–7; see Gal 3:24–26). The meaning of justification comes to poignant expression in the exclamation in Galatians 4:6, "Abba! Father!" ("My Father, my Father"). This exclamation is made possible by the Spirit of the Son flooding the heart of the believer.

Indeed, justification involves the reception of the Spirit, as is clear here and in Galatians 3:1–5, where, immediately after one of Paul's greatest arguments for justification by faith and not works of law (Gal 2:15–21), Paul asks whether the Galatians received "the Spirit by works of the law, or by hearing with faith." Without question, the reception of the Spirit belongs with the event of justification. In this connection 2 Corinthians 3 may be noted again. Not only is "ministration of righteousness" contrasted with "condemnation" (vs. 9, KJV) but "the ministration of the spirit [Spirit]" is contrasted with "the ministration of death" (vss. 7–8, KJV). It is obvious that God's ministration of righteousness (referring here to His justifying action) belongs with the presence of the Spirit. In Romans 5:5 the Christian's future hope of sharing the glory of God is based upon the present experience of the love of God, given through the Spirit. What that love is that the Spirit brings home to the believer is that while we were yet ungodly and helpless (vs. 6), sinners (vs. 8), and enemies (vs. 10) "Christ died for us" (vs. 8), and this made possible our justification (vs. 9), or reconciliation (vs. 10).

Assurance

In consequence of the reception of God's justification, with all the facets it contains and all the metaphors and realities associated with it (redemption, expiation, grace, reckoning, forgiveness, covering, reconciliation, creation, adoption, sonship, Spirit, freedom, life, peace, joy), the Christian has the confident hope of final salvation. This is spelled out fully in Romans 5.

This chapter is built on a how-much-more conceptuality. The specific phrase "much more" occurs three times (vss. 9–10, 17), but the idea suffuses the chapter. In short, for the first part of the chapter (vss. 1–11), if believers have been justified now, how much more will they be saved finally and fully in the judgment at the end.

For the second part of the chapter (vss. 12-21) the argument is that if the race through Adam has been affected with sin, unrighteousness, and death, how much more through Christ is it affected with grace, righteousness, and life. If Adam has brought ruin, how much more has Christ brought victory. With the appearance of the law on Sinai, sin only multiplied (vs. 20) instead of being suppressed, as Judaism held. But where sin increased, grace superincreased "so that, as sin reigned in death, grace also might reign through righteousness to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord" (vss. 20-21).

Thus, the order in Romans 5 leads from the reality of justification to the "how much more" of glorification. (See verses 1–2.) Such a movement harmonizes with the progressing chain of salvation mentioned in Romans 8:29–30. Here once more justification is followed by glorification. And, as in Romans 5, suffering is the prelude to glory. According to Romans 8:17–18, we are "fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him." Furthermore, says Paul, "I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us." Sufferers are bidden to be confident that "in everything God works for good with those who love him" (vs. 28). They are granted the assurance, derived from God's offering of His Son and the justification effected thereby (vss. 32–34), that nothing in heaven or earth will be able to separate them from the love of God in Jesus Christ their Lord (vss. 35–39). Thus, the reality of justification involves the reality of complete and lasting assurance.

The righteousness that brings assurance of final salvation to the believer is based on faith. Paul's doctrine is righteousness by faith, not righteousness by fate. What Christ has done for humankind must be appropriated. God's righteousness, which is provided for all through Jesus Christ, is personally efficacious only by faith.

And what is the basic significance of faith? Though many of Paul's statements are valuable, perhaps no better answer can be found than that contained in Romans 4:19-21. From this text, which speaks of Abraham and his faith, the elements of true faith emerge clearly. According to Paul, notwithstanding Abraham's great age and the barrenness of Sarah's womb, "no distrust made him waver concerning the promise of God." In contrast to distrust, Abraham was "fully convinced that God was able to do what he had promised."

Rather than disbelieving as a result of the apparent hopelessness of the situation, Abraham believed that the word of God expressed in His promise was the ultimate reality for him, and this caused him to grow "strong in his faith." To use another biblical writer's words, Abraham did "not live by bread alone," that is, by empirical reality, "but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God" (Matt 4:4).

Gave Glory to God

Finally, the whole faith event is summarized by, and finds its true direction and ultimate significance in, this, that Abraham "gave glory to God" (Rom 4:20). In the strength of God's promise Abraham's faith grew strong as he gave glory to God. Such a glorification of God stands in stark contrast to, and reverses (1) the sinful reality of, the Gentiles who, according to Romans 1, refused to glorify God or be thankful to Him (vs. 21), but "worshiped and served the creature" (vs. 25), and (2) the sinful reality of the Jews who, according to the implications of Romans 2, gloried in their own self-righteousness. Abraham's stance of faith, taken prior to his circumcision, creates the possibility of a new humanity and makes Abraham the father of both Gentiles and Jews who follow his example (Rom 4:9–12).

We see from Abraham, then, that faith accepts God as God and totally trusts in and depends upon His word. That word becomes, in the argument of Romans 4, the word of the gospel, which tells about Jesus. As Abraham's faith in God's promise was "reckoned to him as righteousness," so "it will be reckoned to us who believe in him that raised from the dead Jesus our Lord, who was put to death for our trespasses and raised for our justification" (vss. 22, 24–25). Faith becomes acceptance of and trust in the gospel. Faith also becomes confession of the gospel, as Romans 10:9–10 makes clear: "Because, if you confess with your lips that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For man believes with his heart and so is justified, and he confesses with his lips and so is saved."

In view of the direction the scriptural data gives to the meaning of faith, it is correct, but incomplete, to call faith, as some do, a passive receptacle. The value of this conception is that it emphasizes our receiving God's accomplishment and thus negates self-accomplishment as a means of justification.

After this truth has been acknowledged, however, the fuller picture should be painted, and the *dynamic* element of faith should be stressed. Faith is a reaction to God's initial action and promise. Faith is divinely stimulated by hearing the word about Christ (vs. 17), but it is to be exercised by the recipient of that word. That Abraham did not weaken in faith (Rom 4:19), that "no distrust made him waver," that "he gave glory to God" (vs. 20), that he was fully convinced (vs. 21), that the Christian is to confess Christ as the risen Lord (Rom 10:9)—these are all action ideas in which the energy of faith is underlined. In faith, people are *involved* directly and personally with the promise of God.

In fact, Paul understands faith so dynamically that he can describe it as obedience, meaning surrender to God's word in the gospel. To heed the gospel's call for faith is to obey God. Such is the case in Romans 1:5 (cf. Rom 16:26), where Paul declares that the very purpose of his apostleship is to bring all nations to "the obedience of faith," meaning the obedience that is faith.

In other words, the purpose of the gospel commission is to lead all nations to believe in Christ. When they believe in Christ they are doing what God through the gospel wishes them to do. This thought is corroborated by Jesus' words in John 6. In response to the people's question "What must we do, to be doing the works of God?" (vs. 28), Jesus replied, "This is the work of God, that you believe in him whom he has sent" (vs. 29). Further evidence that faith is obedience appears in Romans 10:3 where it says of the unbelieving Jews, "They did not submit to [obey] God's righteousness." The same is true of Romans 10:16 which again speaks of unbelieving Israel: "They have not all obeyed [heeded] the gospel; for Isaiah says, 'Lord, who has believed what he has heard from us?' "Romans 10 is the great faith chapter, and yet it speaks of Israel as not obeying the gospel. One also may compare Romans 11:23 with Romans 11:31–32, the former text stressing unbelief and the latter disobedience. Also compare Romans 1:8 with Romans 15:18, the former emphasizing faith and the latter obedience.

The dynamic character of faith also is seen in 1 Thessalonians 1:3, where Paul commends the Thessalonians for their "work of faith and labor of love and steadfastness of hope." Faith, hope, and love are what God asks of man through the gospel. According to Galatians 5:6 what really matters to God is "faith working through love."

Does this make of faith a meritorious work? Not at all. Faith is made possible only through Christ, and it has significance only because it is directed toward Christ. Thus faith's possibility and efficacy is Christ. That is why salvation by faith means salvation by grace. Faith moves us to Christ and lays hold of grace.

Paul's total theology of faith may be summarized by saying that faith is surrender to the verdict, gift, and claim of God. Faith surrenders to God's verdict upon man: "All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Rom 3:23). It surrenders to God's gift to man: "They are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus" (vs. 24). And it surrenders to God's claim upon man: "If we live, we live to the Lord, and if we die, we die to the Lord....

For to this end Christ died and lived again, that he might be Lord both of the dead and of the living" (chap. 14:8–9).

Judgment and Assurance

The apostle Paul strongly supported belief in a coming judgment. Let us look at his major passages.

2 Corinthians 5:9-10. "So whether we are at home or away, we make it our aim to please him. For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive good or evil, according to what he has done in the body."

Romans 14:10, 12. Here the theme that Christians universally must appear before the divine tribunal is stated and given a particular application. In the significant setting of Christ's death and resurrection to be *Lord* of the dead and the living (vs. 9), Paul asks, "Why do you pass judgment on your brother? Or ... why do you despise your brother? For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of God" (vs. 10). Just as the ultimate fate of the Christian is affected by the judgment in 2 Corinthians 5:10—those who are judged receive "good or evil"—so also here.

The implication is obvious—being judgmental of others or despising them (or, as in Romans 14:15, causing "the ruin of one for whom Christ died") will affect one's destiny in the judgment. This is a reassertion of Christ's teaching that with what judgment we judge we shall be judged. Instead of the believer judging and despising others, his attitude should be, "We who are strong ought to bear with the failings of the weak, and not to please ourselves; let each of us please his neighbor for his good, to edify him. For Christ did not please himself" (Rom 15:1–3). In any case, Paul instructs Christians not to entertain unfavorable judgments on others, because "each of us shall give account of himself to God" (Rom 14:12).

Romans 2:16. This text speaks of the day when, as Paul's gospel teaches, God will judge the secrets of human beings by Jesus Christ. And, as Romans 2:6–10 portrays, God will render to every person according to his works. There will be wrath and fury to those who do not obey the truth, but obey wickedness instead; and eternal life for those who, by patiently doing good, show that they seek for glory, honor, and immortality. Because this is true, one must not take refuge in merely hearing the law, for only "the doers of the law will be justified" (vs. 13). While Romans 2 has as its purpose to show that the self-righteous Jew who criticizes the evils of the Gentiles and yet sins himself (vss. 1–3, 21–24) cannot be justified by his works, the chapter still contains the actual standard of the judgment.

The standard of the judgment should not be confused, however, with the method by which the standard is reached. Paul spends the rest of Romans, from 3:21 on, explaining the method. His explanation, I would contend, encompasses not only the theological portion of the book (through Romans 11), where the indicative of God's saving grace is presented as the foundation of redemption, but also the ethical portion of the book, commencing with chapter 12, where the divine imperative, arising out of the redemption offered in the gospel, is presented. This is not to mix justification and sanctification, but to show that true justification always issues in sanctification.

New Conformity to God

Only when the grace of God, which to the end continues as the basis for eternal life, leads to a new conformity to God (see Romans 12:1-2) is the Christian prepared to stand in the judgment. The ethical portion of Romans is not extraneous or a mere appendage to the picture of the mercies of God in Romans 1-11. Grace always unfolds and interprets itself in a new way of life, and only this total movement is acceptable to God. We cannot doubt that the Christian will require the mercy of God to the end, but this mercy must always bear fruit. The life received from God is to be the life lived for God.

Among Seventh-day Adventists and by Seventh-day Adventists, the gospel message of Romans must be heard today in its entirety, both as indicative (the reality of God's gift) and imperative (the reality of God's claim). (Note again how Paul says in Romans 2:16 that his preaching of the gospel includes the message of the judgment.) Only in the living conjunction of gift and claim is realized the full potentiality of "being restored to a right relation with God." (See Romans 2:17.)

- 1 Corinthians 3:13. "Each man's work will become manifest; for the Day will disclose it, because it will be revealed with fire, and the fire will test what sort of work each one has done." Later we will look at the function of this text in its context.
- 1 Corinthians 4:5. "Therefore do not pronounce judgment before the time, before the Lord comes, who will bring to light the things now hidden in darkness and will disclose the purposes of the heart. Then every man will receive his commendation from God."

Although Paul stresses "commendation" in the last part of the verse, it is clear that the disclosure of "things hidden in darkness" may, in the case of some people, bring the opposite result. It is not Paul's purpose here to spell this out, but it is a legitimate inference from his language. The reason for his emphasis upon commendation alone is a personal one. This commendation stands in contrast to Paul's concern in verse 3 that he should be judged by the Corinthians or by any human court. He is not concerned about *their* commendation, but about God's.

The primary point of the verse, then, has to do with the ultimate vindication of Paul's apostolic ministry. However, the implications of the fact that God will "bring to light the things now hidden in darkness" extend more broadly. Manifestly, Paul has applied language belonging to a larger concept of the judgment to his own ministry. (See Romans 2:16.)

Colossians 3:5-6. "Put to death therefore what is earthly in you: fornication, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. On account of these the wrath of God is coming."

1 Thessalonians 4:6. In respect to his exhortations on sexual purity Paul says, "... that no man transgress, and wrong his brother in the matter, because the Lord is an avenger in all these things, as we solemnly forewarned you."

Galatians 5:21. The strong emphasis upon forewarning in 1 Thessalonians 4:6 is also made here. After another list of vices, Paul says, "I warn you [now], as I warned you before, that those who do such things shall not inherit the king-dom of God."

1 Corinthians 6:9. This is another text with a list of vices. Paul's manner of emphasis is instructive. "Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived." Surely you ought to know this, says Paul. But it is a matter, he admits, over which one could be deceived. He warns against such a deception.

Ephesians 5:5-6. This carries a similar warning on not being deceived. "Be sure of this, that no fornicator or impure man, or one who is covetous (that is an idolater), has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God. Let no one deceive you with empty words, for it is because of these things that the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience."

Galatians 6:7–8. Here, not being deceived is coupled with another thought. "Do not be deceived; God is not mocked, for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap. For he who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption; but he who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life."

This text makes an important contribution when it says that "God is not mocked." Surely it would be a mockery of God for a person to receive His acceptance and then refuse to live acceptably through His Spirit. A life lived deliberately by the flesh can never accord with the reality and intent of God's justifying grace.

Every Christian ought to ask himself whether his way of life mocks the God who has given him life. The accent in Galatians 6:7–8 on being deceived and mocking God finds an outstanding parallel in Jeremiah 7:8–10: "Behold, you trust in deceptive words to no avail. Will you steal, murder, commit adultery, swear falsely, burn incense to Baal, and go after other gods that you have not known, and then come and stand before me in this house, which is called by my name, and say, 'We are delivered!'—only to go on doing all these abominations?"

Romans 8:5-13. This text makes the same contrast between flesh and Spirit. Verse 13 says, "For if you live according to the flesh you will die, but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body you will live."

Hebrews 2:1-3. "Therefore we must pay the closer attention to what we have heard, lest we drift away from it. For if the message declared by angels was valid and every transgression or disobedience received a just retribution, how shall we escape if we neglect such a great salvation?"

Hebrews 10:26-31. What is briefly mentioned in Hebrews 2:1-3 is fully developed in this text from Hebrews 10. The text speaks for itself: "For if we sin deliberately after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, but a fearful prospect of judgment, and a fury of fire which will consume the adversaries. A man who has violated the law of Moses dies without mercy at the testimony of two or three witnesses. How much worse punishment do you think will be deserved by the man who has spurned the Son of God, and profaned the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified, and outraged the Spirit of grace? For we know him who said, 'Vengeance is mine, I will repay.' And again, 'The Lord will judge his people. 'It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God."

Summary of Main Truths of Judgment Texts

While those who remain committed to Christ need to have no fear of God's judgment or anxiety concerning salvation, three things, at least, are clear from these judgment passages. What is said here will be clarified later on in this essay and set in relation to God's rich salvation. (1) Christians, all those justified by faith, come into the judgment. (2) The judgment is made according to their works. (3) Two destinies are possible to those who have professed Christ: eternal life on the one hand, death on the other. In other words, people can be saved or lost as a result of this judgment.

No one need be lost—to prevent this is the reason for all the warnings in the judgment texts—but one can be lost if he is indifferent to God's word and will.

As the biblical texts on grace do not allow for the false view "Never quite saved at all, no matter what Christ has done," so the judgment texts disallow the erroneous view "Once saved, always saved, no matter what I may do." Salvation is always a gift, but the gift does not remain when the Giver is rejected as Lord of our life.

A Tension Resolved

Various attempts have been made to resolve the tension between justification and judgment.

1. Some people claim that the texts on judgment according to works are an appendage from Paul's Jewish past in which apocalyptic played an important role. The judgment texts, they would say, are a kind of apocalyptic hangover. They must therefore yield to Paul's view on justification.

According to this position, then, there is really only one, not two, foci to Paul's preaching. The judgment idea, therefore, is pronounced nonfunctional for Paul. This apocalyptic-rejectionistic view is completely unacceptable as an interpretation of Paul. It flies in the face of the *frequency* of Paul's judgment texts, the *stringency* of his thought, and the *centrality* of the judgment for his argument.

2. Some advocate what may be called the imperfectionistic view. They argue that since people can never be perfect because of indwelling sin, faith is the only operative principle in the judgment, just as at the original bestowal of justification. For this reason the only real function of biblical statements about judgment according to works is to cause people to flee to justification by faith, where the mercy needed may be found. Judgment according to works, then, is not really a future actuality except for the person outside of Christ. For the Christian, judgment according to works comes to mean according to Christ's works rather than the *Christian*'s works.

This view contains a positive element when it stresses the primacy of righteousness by faith, but in an effort to gain easy harmony with justification, it does despite to the judgment texts. Clearly, the scriptural data indicate that the Christian's works—made possible through Jesus Christ, to be sure—are in view in this judgment and that forfeiture of eternal life can result if grace has not given birth to discipleship. Further, this view does not take seriously the fulfill-ment-of-the-law motif found in Paul's writings (Rom 8:4; 13:8–10; Gal 5:13–14; 6:2). Where this motif occurs, it does not refer to imputation of the righteousness of the law but to the actualization of its righteousness in the life of the Christian through the power of the Spirit. We recognize that this fulfillment lacks the character of absolute perfection, but we affirm that God's will comes to concrete expression in the life of the Christian. Moreover, the imperfectionistic view misunderstands the imperative in Paul. It perceives the imperative as functioning only to speak of our *undoing* before God rather than—what it really is in Paul and elsewhere—of our *doing* the will of God.

Indeed, Scripture asks of us so much, so uncompromisingly, that it takes our breath away. However, it remains true that through the power of the Spirit (which came to believers together with God's justifying grace in the first place; cf. Galatians 2:16, 21 with 3:1-3) believers actually may "walk in newness of life" now (Rom 6:4).

Through Christ and like Christ, it can be said of the Christian that the life he lives, he lives to God. (See Romans 6:11.) The biblical ethic not only leads a person back to justification but is the living fruit of justification. If we must flee back continually to the cross because of the stringency of God's demand, it is also true that we must move into the world with the cross, as disciples of Christ who follow His way.

3. A third understanding may be called the partitionistic, or perfectionistic, view. (Let us distinguish at the outset between "perfection," which the Bible ever directs us to, and "perfectionism" which is the claim to have arrived.) According to this view, justification by faith refers to the beginning of Christian existence, and at the end we find judgment according to works. We are justified *initially* by faith but *finally* by the attainment through grace of the standard of perfection. According to this, there really is no need for mercy in the judgment because the believer has put away every imperfect deed.

The perfectionistic view has positive elements: It recognizes that God calls us to perfection, it takes discipleship seriously, and it points up God's purpose to fulfill the law in experience, not to destroy it.

However, this view has serious shortcomings. First, it leaves justification and faith behind, whereas Paul does not. For Paul, faith taking hold of the righteousness of God is the foundation of right relations with God in all time—past, present, and future. This is inherent in the phrase "from faith to faith" in Romans 1:17 and is explicitly taught in Galatians 5:5, where it is through the Spirit, by faith, that we await "the hope of righteousness" (meaning the hoped-for righteousness). In other words, faith grasps the future righteousness of God as well as its present manifestation. According to Romans 5:1–2, justification by faith leads us to glory.

Again, Paul, the very one who powerfully presents both justification by faith alone and judgment according to works, refused to claim perfection even at the possible close of his life, as we see in Philippians 3:12–14. He knew that Christ had made him fully His own but that he had not yet made the infinite riches of Christ fully his own (3:12b).

Shallow Understanding of Perfection

Finally, this view has a shallow understanding of perfection. It does not seem to comprehend adequately the significance of the "more and more" of Paul's teaching. According to Paul, we may be pleasing God and loving one another, as God has taught, but we are not to be content with this, but to do so more and more (1 Thess 4:1, 9–10). The standard of perfection is always ahead of the Christian and can never be said to have been realized fully. This is so because the gift of Christ is so infinite that His claim must be infinite as well. As totally as He gives Himself for and to us, so He totally claims our lives for His service. To say that one is *on the way*, as Paul did (Phil 3:12–14), is one thing, but to say one *has arrived at perfection* is another. This position Paul rejects, even when he counsels us to "hold true to what we have attained" (vs. 16). Something has happened, but more is to come. Heaven itself has been described rightly as a ceaseless approaching to God.

4. Another view declares that the judgment only assesses ranks of blessedness for the redeemed but does not determine salvation or lostness. A caption in a recent religious periodical article calls attention to this view: "The cases of believers are not in jeopardy in the judgment for their representative has already sealed their justification." The following explanation and support is given in the text of the article:

"What about the texts that indicate Christians will be judged according to their works? Doesn't the Bible teach that believers will be held accountable for the way they lived? It is true that 'we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ' (2 Cor 5:10). But while the Bible says we shall be judged according to our works, it does not teach we shall be justified on account of our good works (Rom 3:20). Believers will be recompensed at that time for the good they have done through God's grace (Eph 6:8; Matt 25:32–40). Because we have already been justified in Christ this final reckoning will in no way jeopardize our acceptance with God. George Ladd, in A Theology of the New Testament, explains it like this:

"The believer will be judged for his works. Our life will be laid bare before the divine scrutiny that each one may receive the proper recompense for the things done through the life of the body, in accordance with the things that he has done, whether that life record is good or bad. This judgment is not "a declaration of doom, but an assessment of worth," involving not condemnation or acquittal, but rewards or loss on the basis of the worthfulness or worthlessness of the Christian's life. The same principle of judgment is expounded in 1 Corinthians 3:12–15. Paul is here speaking of the work of Christian leaders, but the principle is valid for all believers. The only foundation upon which anything permanent can be built is Jesus Christ. However, not all build alike. Some erect structures with gold, silver, or precious stones; others will build worthless houses of wood, hay, or stubble.... Their works, like wood, hay, and stubble, will be consumed in the flames of judgment so that nothing remains as a result of their life on earth. This does not mean loss of salvation: "he himself will be saved," but he will suffer loss of the "well done, good and faithful servant." Those who have built faithfully and effectively will be rewarded for their love and devotion. Paul does not indicate what the reward will be. The principle involved in this judgment is that while salvation is altogether of grace, the Christian is left in no doubt that he is regarded by God as fully answerable for the quality of his present life.' "1

The major problem with this view, aside from the fact that it seems to imply that there will be a kind of caste system in the kindgom to come, is that it is not in harmony with the clear import of the biblical passages on the judgment. It omits consideration of the significance of all these texts. From the judgment statements it is clear that ultimate destiny indeed is determined in the judgment, and works (works stemming from faith, of course) do have a significant part to play in the determination.

Not only does this view, represented in the article quoted above, omit much of the biblical evidence, but it also commits the error of misusing some of the passages it does cite. For example, Matthew 25:32-40 is summoned to support the contention, made only on the positive side, that "believers will be recompensed ... for the good they have done through God's grace." (What of the evil they have done apart from God's grace?)

Unless the assumption is that among the lost of this parable none had been believers, the parable teaches unequivocally that a mere profession of faith does not pass the judgment, but only doing the will of the Father in terms of deeds of mercy. Unless Christ told this parable to justify the Jewish nation and condemn all the Gentiles—and it seems rather to show that being a Jew, a professed believer, without deeds of kindness affords no advantage but only loss in comparison with "unbelieving" Gentiles who do the will of God—it clearly teaches the principle that "believers" may be lost when they do not represent the essential character of the kingdom.

Without "Well Done" No One Enters the Kingdom

Also using Matthew 25, in this case verse 23, George Ladd says that "Well done, good and faithful servant" will not be said to those who, according to 1 Corinthians 3:12–15, have built poorly on the foundation of Christ. These persons will be saved, but they will lose the reward that salvation gives to those who have built well. Ladd misuses both the Matthean and the Corinthian passages. It must be noted that in Matthew 25:23, "'Well done'" is followed by, and is the presupposition for, "Enter into the joy of your master.'" This joy is not only one aspect of the kingdom reserved for some people (good builders) who enter the kingdom and not for others (poor builders) who also enter the kingdom. Rather, joy is a summary term for the kingdom as a whole. Without "Well done" no one enters the kingdom at all or participates in any of its joy.

As for 1 Corinthians 3:12–15, this passage is misunderstood if it is used to teach that no matter what a believer does in his personal life, he still will be saved at the end of time. The statement, "he himself will be saved, but only as through fire," is not so much an overt promise as it is an implied warning. It challenges those in positions of leadership who may be building the temple of God poorly because they encourage factions rather than unity in the church—this is the subject of 1 Corinthians 3, not the personal sins of each member of the congregation, as Ladd would have us believe. It challenges them to be careful, for in the fires of the divine judgment they will escape only "as through fire," that is, by "the skin of their teeth."

The picture is of one running through the burning edifice he has built to escape for his life. No responsible leader in the church could rest comfortably in view of such a conception as this. The intensity of Paul's thought and the fatefulness of the judgment come to climactic expression when Paul says in the verses immediately following 3:12–15 that the church constitutes the temple of God and that "if any one destroys God's temple, God will destroy him." No unconditional "he will be saved" here! Let all take heed. Poor builders will barely make it; destroyers will not make it at all.

The view that the judgment determines only ranks of blessedness fails because it conflicts with one of the pillars of Paul's thought. The actual meaning of Paul's statements on the judgment is circumvented because of a certain view of justification. Mere human logic is involved here, operating without all the data of Scripture.

5. In my opinion the view that best recommends itself by reason of the total data of Paul's thought is what might be termed the dynamic, salvation-historical view. This view contains the two poles, so prominent in Paul, of the "already" of salvation begun and the "not yet" of salvation completed. The "already" and "not yet" are operative both in God's salvation-history and in individual human experience as it is linked to that history. The essence of this view is that there is only one justification, and it accompanies the believer from the time of faith's inception (the "already") all the way into the final judgment, where its reality and vitality are tested and attested by its fruits (the "not yet").

The Bible teaches that justification belongs to "last things," for it brings the hoped-for verdict of acquittal in the last judgment into the present. Interestingly, however, according to Scripture, last things themselves have a beginning and an end. The principle is "He who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Christ Jesus" (Phil 1:6). Therefore, the testimony of Scripture is contradicted when human logic concludes that since justification, a present reality through faith, belongs to last things, nothing further can be asked of the believer in the final judgment. Though the blessing of acquittal in the future judgment indeed becomes operative even now, Scripture is clear that what God desires to see in the final judgment is justified believers who through His grace have borne fruit to His glory (vss. 9–11).

The new history God gives each believer is not over when he comes to Christ and is justified; it is just begun. At the end God asks for justification with its fruit—not in the sense of the formula "Faith plus works saves," but in the sense that justification is the source of sanctified fruit.

In the final judgment Christ as Saviour and Lord can ask legitimately of those He has justified, "Have you, in the strength of My grace, been My disciple?" Reality should answer, "Yes!" This answer could not have been given when believers first came to Christ and received His justification. Discipleship can begin only when one meets Jesus, the justifier, but it indeed begins as the believer yields his entire future life to the sovereignty of God's already-present love.

From "Already" to "Not Yet"

For Paul the consummation of God's plan arrives when justification, first objectively revealed at the cross and subjectively appropriated by faith, has run its course and manifested its complete intent through sanctification, and it arrives fully at the destination of eternal life. This is the order of salvation found in Romans 6:15–23 and summarized in verse 22: "But now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves of God, the return you get is sanctification and its end, eternal life."

The movement from justification to eternal life is a movement from "already" to "not yet." But for each reality itself, both justification and life, there is also an "already," and a "not yet." The righteousness of God has already been received; yet believers await that hope (Gal 5:5). What joins what has been and what will be is faith working by love (vs. 6). Only when the faith of Christians has worked by love can the final verdict be "Righteous!" As for eternal life, it will one day be full possession (Rom 5:21), but it is now experienced as anticipation. (See, for example, Romans 6:4, "walk in newness of life" [RSV] and 6:13, "as those that are alive from the dead" [KJV].) Sanctification, or maturation of life in Christ, is a connecting link between life as anticipation and life as full possession.

In the "already"-"not yet" theology of Paul judgment according to works is a fulfillment of the "not yet" aspect of justification by faith. Grace, which accompanies the believer to the end, reaches its goal in goodness, and this the judgment finds certain. The saviorhood of Christ for us is manifested fully in His lordship over us. The judgment asks if this has become reality. To fail to take due account of the judgment according to works is, in a word, to discount the "not yet" element of Paul's theology of salvation.

What is being said here is that last events do not climax at the cross and faith's reception of it, but begin there. What happened at the cross and to those who accept the cross continues to unfold its significance and application through the continuing ministry of Jesus until the cross has achieved its ultimate victory and Christ is Lord of all.

Under the Lordship of Christ

The judgment according to works teaches that the cross, as a saving event, puts us under the lordship, or reign, of Christ. To reject discipleship or to refuse to walk in sanctification, which, according to Romans 6, is inseparable from justification, is to reject Christ as both our Saviour and our Lord. Judgment according to works asks not simply about isolated works, but about the relation of the believer to Christ in the duality and unity of His saviorhood and lordship.

If Paul had been asked to illustrate in a parable his teaching on justification and judgment, he might well have chosen the type of parable represented by the story of the unmerciful servant (Matt 18:23–35). This parable represents very well what Paul in fact teaches. Like the unmerciful servant, sinners are called to account the first time by the king and forgiven an insurmountable debt. Justification operates in this way. However, when those who are forgiven, as the servant was, refuse to extend mercy to others, as the servant refused, they are called to account again by the king and sentenced to prison. The pardoned are now the penalized! This accords with Paul's teaching on judgment according to works.

If it is asked on the basis of this parable if works are the ultimate ground of salvation or damnation, the answer is "No!" The ground of salvation is the mercy of the king. The absence of merciful deeds on the part of the servant only confirmed that he had no conception of what mercy really was and that he had rejected it as an operative principle for the whole life.

Mercy can never be only for oneself and guarded as a means of aggrandizement instead of an instrument of healing. Indeed, if God is king, our king, is it not clear that the character of His rule must characterize us? This is not to save ourselves by our works but to let God's works fully save us. We are not saved by our mercy, but God's salvation produces merciful people. "For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them" (Eph 2:10).

What is at stake in the parable is the gracious rule of the king. In testing us in terms of our mercy, what is proved is that the ultimate reality that defines and influences all things, including ourselves, is the mercy of God. That is why the final resolution of the Great Controversy is the universal testimony that God is love.

A final point in this parable that represents the spirit and thrust of Paul's thought resides in the paradoxical truth that mercy is for the merciful. Unlike Judaism's teaching that mercy would flee away in the final judgment and only justice would remain. (See 2 Esdras 7:33.) Christ taught that God's mercy would be fully operative in the final judgment. But it would function only for those who had showed mercy in response to God's mercy.

Here the question arises: If one has shown mercy in this life, why does he need mercy in the judgment? In the light of Jesus Christ the only answer is that while the character of Christ can be imitated and approximated, the infinite character of His goodness can never be equaled. Consequently, two things must remain true for the judgment: (1) the sanctified fruit of justification must be present, but (2) justification itself must continue its function of pardon. Grace is not in contradiction with fruit, nor fruit with grace. In the judgment the two elements coexist. "You have been *faithful* over *a little*; I will set you over much" (Matt 25:23).

The conclusion of our discussion about the question of assurance is to say that if justification grants assurance, judgment guards it. It guards it from the illusion that assurance is possible without a fundamental relationship to Christ and a committed following of Christ. Our works do not give us assurance, but the One whom we in grateful response follow in our works does. Thus the question of works and assurance is the question of Christ. The believer can always be assured of salvation if his answer to Christ is "Yes." There is no assurance in saying "No" to Him who first said "Yes" to us. Paul illustrates this point in his exposition in 1 Corinthians 10:1–13. All was well with Israel—and will be will with the church, Israel's counterpart—as long as it followed the Rock, which was Christ. But when it desired evil it was destroyed by the destroyer.

The judgment upon spiritually privileged Israel proves that those who think they stand, those who are assured of their salvation apart from concern for the will of God, should take heed lest they fall (vs. 12). But no one need fall, for God can always make a way of escape from temptation (vs. 13). Therefore, belivers have the security of sonship only as those who are tempted. The biblical teaching on the judgment would remind us of this and give a proper foundation for true assurance—adherence to Christ.

CHRIST: SAVIOUR AND LORD

Editorial synopsis. In the sphere of God's redeeming grace the *gift* of God (salvation) and the *claim* of God (obedience to His commandments) are inseparably connected. The gift and claim reflect the fundamental truth that Christ is both Saviour and Lord of the believer. Christ's relationship to the believer serves to illustrate the relationship between justification and judgment.

By looking for works as the fruit of faith, the judgment testifies to the reality of the penitent's salvation. This must be so because genuine forgiveness results in a new creation, a transformation and a continuing restoration of the image of God within the trusting believer. Thus the judgment according to works in relation to justification by faith underscores the wholeness and unity of the plan of salvation since Christ is Lord as well as Saviour.

It is evident, therefore, that judgment by works does not stand in a contradictory relationship to justification, but in a relationship of fulfillment. To reject judgment according to works would be to reject the totality of God's redemptive intention. The Christ of the cross who justifies always says as Lord to the justified, "Take up the cross, and follow Me." The judgment attests and witnesses to the reality and genuineness of that following.

Seventh-day Adventists see the preadvent judgment portrayed in the prophecies (Dan 7–9) as an integral part of the final judgment. The investigative judgment in heaven inaugurates the final judgment that is consummated when Christ returns the second time and again after the millennium. This initial phase of final judgment discloses the true relation of believers to Christ, and the closing phase rewards believers in accordance with the true nature of their service for Christ.

At times the writings of John have been used to make of no effect the NT teaching on the final judgment and the issues involved. An analysis of John's teaching, however, demonstrates that his thought is in complete agreement with the testimony of the rest of Scripture.

In His dual office as Saviour and Lord, Christ judged sin at the cross, justifies the sinner on the basis of his faith response, and judges the justified by his works. The cross is the means by which justification is effected. Faith is the means by which justification is accepted. Good works are the means by which justification is manifested. Works of righteousness testify to the reality and vitality of justification. Their absence indicates a broken relation with Jesus.

Section Outline

- I. Introduction
- II. Christ: Saviour and Lord
- III. Preadvent Judgment
- IV. Judgment in the Writings of John
- V. Conclusions

Introduction

We must now develop an element mentioned previously. The relationship between justification and judgment can be seen better by placing it in the setting of a discussion on the relation between Christ as Saviour and Christ as Lord, between the gift of God and the claim of God.

Jesus once said, "What therefore God has joined together, let not man put asunder" (Matt 19:6). While the context is a discussion of marriage, the substance of His remark seems appropriate regarding salvation.

In the sphere of God's redeeming grace the gift of God and the claim of God are inseparably connected. The more we exalt His gift to us, the more we at the same time magnify His claim upon us. The more radically one perceives and receives the love of God, the more radically there is created a new ethic of love, a new life of discipleship and service.

Christ: Saviour and Lord

One can no more separate God's gift and claim than he can divide Christ as Saviour from Christ as Lord. The confession that Christ is Saviour and Lord belongs to the very essence of NT Christianity. One cannot have Christ only as Saviour or only as Lord; Christ comes to us as both. There is the most intimate bond between the two realities.

The saviorhood of Christ is revealed in particular at the cross, where the love of Christ, already manifested during His earthly life, receives its climactic expression. But it is at the cross that His lordship also is revealed. His lordship is established precisely through His love. Christ's lordship is the rule of His love.

Many people are afraid of the idea of lordship. The concept seems to suggest to them the thought of a hard, oppressive, and perhaps arbitrary authority. But this is not the NT picture of Christ. Christ as Lord can be understood only in the light of Christ as Saviour. As Lord, Christ rules from the cross. The self-giving love of Christ revealed in His life and death is the very heart of His reign over us. There is no other principle in His crown than that manifested in His cross. To speak of His lordship is only to say that His sacrificial love is meant to prevail in all the earth. As Lord He claims our entire life for His love.

With the indivisibility of Christ as Saviour and Lord in mind we can readily see that there is an inner connection between what Christ gives to us and what He claims of us:

He comes to us in love—in the light and strength of it He asks that we be loving.

He comes to us in mercy—in the joy and power of it He asks that we be merciful.

He comes to us in forgiveness—He asks that we be forgiving.

He comes to us in kindness—He asks that we be kind.

He comes to us in gentleness—He asks that we be gentle. He comes to us in sacrifice—He asks that we live sacrificially.

He comes to us as our servant—He asks that we serve others.

All that the Christian is to do is revealed in, and is the product of, what Christ has done for him. His gift is both the content of His claim and the strength to fulfill it.

There are a number of texts that ground what believers are to do in the gift, strength, and example of what Christ has done for them. For example:

John 13:34 "Love one another ... as I have loved you."

Eph 5:25 "Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her" (NIV).

Eph 4:32 "Forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you."

Rom 12:1 "I beseech you ... by the mercies of God [God's sacrificial grace described in Romans 1–11], that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice" (KJV).

Col 2:6 "As you received the Lord Jesus, so walk in him."1

Gal 5:25 "If we have gained life through the Spirit, let us live according to the Spirit."2

Rom 14:8–9 "If we live, we live to the Lord, and if we die, we die to the Lord; so then, whether we live or whether we die, we are the Lord's. For to this end Christ died and lived again, that he might be the Lord both of the dead and of the living."

2 Cor 5:14-15"For the love of Christ controls us, because we are convinced that one has died for all; therefore all have died. And he died for all, that those who live might live no longer for themselves but for him who for their sake died and was raised."

om 14:15 "If your brother is being injured by what you eat, you are no longer walking in love. Do not let what you eat cause the ruin of one for whom Christ died."

Rom 15:2-3 "Let each of us please his neighbor for his good, to edify him. For Christ did not please himself; but, as it is written, 'The reproaches of those who reproached thee fell on me.'"

Phil 2:5–11 (Christ's humility and service) in relation to Philippians 2:1–4 (the church's call to humility and service).

These texts and others like them make it clear that in Christ's act of self-giving our redemption was accomplished, but also that in this self-giving our discipleship was revealed. To see and accept what Christ has done for us is to know what He wishes to do through us.

To live in harmony with His claim, as a consequence of the reality of His gift, is not to save oneself by one's own works. It is rather to accept the Messiah truly and to have one's life shaped by His deliverance. Not to live in accord with His claim is to reject the Messiah and the kingdom He brings, the rule He establishes. How can Christ be our king if we are not His servants?

Complete Assurance Necessary

At this point let us consider a further word about assurance. Without complete assurance that God forgives and accepts us we cannot possibly live for Christ and in harmony with His claim. If we do not realize fully our acceptance we cannot be freed from preoccupation and anxiety over self to have sufficient interest and time to concentrate on others. Furthermore, without this personal assurance we will not have the insight or strength needed to accept others fully. How can I understand acceptance and really accept others if I do not know Christ's acceptance of me?

What we receive in Christ determines what we do for Christ. The gift of Christ can be passed only when it has been experienced. First John 1:1-3 is relevant in this regard: "That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, ... and touched with our hands, concerning the word of life ... [we] proclaim to you."

According to the NT, the event that secures our acquittal also secures our renewal. Forgiveness is linked with a new creation.

I remember a telephone call I received after preaching a sermon that dealt with forgiveness and new creation. The caller said, "During the first half of your sermon I thought, Here we go again; just another sermon on forgiveness. But when you got to the second part, on being created anew, then you were preaching the gospel!" I appreciated the fact that someone would take the time to call me about the sermon, but somehow I felt that the main point had been lost.

What I was trying to say was that *renewal* is born of *forgiveness*. Without forgiveness renewal is not possible, and without renewal forgiveness is truncated, ineffective, misunderstood. Ellen White grasped the matter well in two statements on forgiveness. Written from different perspectives, they are united in the vision they afford of what salvation in Christ includes:

"The religion of Christ means more than the forgiveness of sin; it means taking away our sins, and filling the vacuum with the graces of the Holy Spirit. It means divine illumination, rejoicing in God. It means a heart emptied of self, and blessed with the abiding presence of Christ. When Christ reigns in the soul, there is purity, freedom from sin. The glory, the fullness, the completness of the gospel plan is fulfilled in the life. The acceptance of the Saviour brings a glow of perfect peace, perfect love, perfect assurance. The beauty and fragrance of the character of Christ revealed in the life testifies that God has indeed sent His Son into the world to be its Saviour."

"But forgiveness has a broader meaning than many suppose. When God gives the promise that He 'will abundantly pardon,' He adds, as if the meaning of that promise exceeded all that we could comprehend: 'My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.' Isaiah 55:7–9. God's forgiveness is not merely a judicial act by which He sets us free from condemnation. It is not only forgiveness for sin, but reclaiming from sin. It is the outflow of redeeming love that transforms the heart. David had the true conception of forgiveness when he prayed, 'Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me.' Psalm 51:10. And again he says, 'As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us.' Psalm 103:12."4

Relevant to the discussion of God's gift and claim is Paul's attitude toward, and argument against, two classes of people who falsified the gospel. Paul threatened judgment against both classes. The first class felt that their works of law could contribute to justification, and the second reasoned that the justified could or would continue in the works of sin.

The first class is described in the letter to the Galatians. They are those who would subtract from Christ by adding to Him their own works. According to Paul, justification by works in any sense spells the end of justification by grace in every sense. "If justification were through the law," argued Paul, "then Christ died to no purpose" (Gal 2:21). The inference is plain: since Christ died for a redemptive purpose, those who would be justified by works of law are severed from Christ and fallen from grace (chap. 5:4). Against those who would alter the gospel of the sole sufficiency of Christ, Paul hurls an anathema (1:8–9).

There is another group that comes under the ire of the apostle. They are those who claim that Paul's doctrine of the justification of the ungodly by faith apart from works of law leads only to continued life in sin. If grace superabounds where sin abounds, as Paul claims, continued sinning is good—it gives God's grace a chance to work! This objection is reflected in Romans 6:1–2, where Paul says, "What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid." Paul was especially sensitive to the objection. In Romans 3:8 he condemns such a view with utter seriousness: "And why not do evil that good may come?—as some people slanderously charge us with saying. Their condemnation is just."

As Romans 6 shows, while Paul teaches the justification of *sinners*, he does not teach the justification of *sinfulness*. Far from it, he shows that the Christian is united to Christ in His death and risen life (vss. 3–8). Therefore, just as Christ died to sin and henceforth lives for God (vs. 10), so also does the person united to Christ through baptism.

Real Forgiveness Leads to Freedom

It is difficult to see how such an objection as that referred to in Romans 6:1 could have arisen. Surely the consideration of God's radical goodness to us is the foundation of a new ethic and not its demise. Can we truly be forgiven and then go on hurting God and fellow humans all the more? Is it not true instead that real forgiveness leads to real freedom not only from the penalty of sin but also from its power?

It is clear and sad that behind the objection that grace spells sin rather than service stands one who by the very question he asks—"Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?"—shows that he has a wrong relation to the gospel. The objection envisions one who affirms his acceptance of grace but for whom grace is not the definitive power of his life, the power that defines and gives substance and shape to his entire life. Such a position places grace merely at the perimeters of life and makes Christianity to be the bearer of a legal fiction, namely the pardon of criminals who continue in their criminality as the habitual pattern of life. (This was the charge against Paul's theology.)

This view is not merely the reduction of Christianity to the message of forgiveness alone, but it is the reduction of forgiveness to an act devoid of the creative element, devoid of the power of renewal. Forgiveness, which is the essential meaning of justification (see Romans 4:6–8), comes to mean only freedom from penalties, and not positive reconciliation and commitment to and service for God—a new orientation in life and a new life principle. In this view the gospel provides a way to extend life quantitatively in the eternal world, but not a way to live new lives qualitatively in the present world.

One who ascribes this kind of position to Paul or espouses it himself transposes the categories of sin and grace into personal experience in such a way as though sin were not conquered fundamentally by grace in salvation-history, as Romans 5:12 and following verses asserts it was. According to this passage, sin, which came into the world by Adam, was so strong that even the revelation of God's holy law on Sinai could not stop it. The problem was not diminished but aggravated, and sin multiplied as transgression (vs. 20). But what the law could not do, because it was weak through the flesh, God did through Jesus Christ (Rom 8:3). By His obedience, in contrast to Adam's disobedience, He won the victory over sin.

The Christian is called upon to participate in this salvation-history victory of Christ's life, death, and resurrection, not to create in his experience once again the conditions that made Christ's historical victory over sin a necessity. To allow sin to reign in experience that grace may come is, for Paul, to reject what God in His grace has done historically in Christ.

The person who utters this objection does not understand the sovereignty of grace either as making possible a new morality or as making it necessary. Grace is not seen as God's radical claim to the whole person of the believer. Something blocks the passage to this recognition, for one would think that he who is forgiven much would love much in return (see Luke 7:42, 47), that he would try to serve and please the injured party.

It is clear that, from the Pauline standpoint, we have here a cheap understanding of grace in which there is no call to discipleship. Dietrich Bonhoeffer is right when he says that "the only man who has the right to say that he is justified

by grace alone is the man who has left all to follow Christ."5

As a matter of fact, in respect to the reality of discipleship, is it gift or claim when Christ says, as He did to Matthew, "Follow me"? Is this not both gift and claim in one? Is not Christ's call grace, and can this grace ever be received truly if we will not follow the Saviour? Similarly when Paul speaks of "the fruit of the Spirit" (Gal 5:22), is he referring to a gift or a claim? Surely the fruit of the Spirit must be gift and claim in one.

In response to those who accuse or abuse God's grace, Paul protests in Romans 6:2 and 15 with a resounding "God forbid" (KJV). This "God forbid" finds its full meaning in Romans 6 in the fact that just as Paul has shown in the previous chapters of Romans that God's righteousness spells grace and life for the believer, now he will show that God's grace spells out in the believer righteousness and a new kind of life. If human sin requires God's righteousness, God's righteousness also requires human obedience to our Lord, with whom we participate in death and resurrection. In contrast to the objector's "Let us continue in sin" (see vs. 1), Paul says, "Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal bodies" (vs. 12).

Paul shows that it is precisely the person justified by grace, apart from works, who dies to sin so as to live for God. According to Romans 6:2, "How can we who died to sin still live in it?" This dying to sin is not a second stage after justi-

fication, but is a reality that coheres with justification itself.

What does Paul mean by dying to sin? He means, in brief, an exchange of lordships. Previously sin had been lord, and now Christ is. To have a new Lord is at once to be freed from the old lord (this is the gift) and to be enlisted in the

Far from this exchange being a static state of sinlessness, Paul contends that under the new lordship of Christ, the Christian wages war against sin (vss. 12–13), the old lord of his life. It is precisely because the shackles of sin are off that he is free to struggle, and because sin still continues to pose a challenge, it is necessary to struggle.

The Risen Christ Rules

The challenge in Romans 6:12 not to let sin reign means that freedom gained by the gift of Christ is the freedom to be used in the cause of Christ. Obeying Christ as Lord is a part of belonging to Christ as Saviour. The risen Christ rules from the cross over all who have been baptized into His death.

In a word, according to Romans 6, death to sin means freedom from sin's sovereignty so as to resist sin's solicitation. It is deliverance from sin as one's ruler so as to fight against sin as one's enemy.

Regarding the judgment, the relevance of all that has been discussed in this section may be summarized as follows. By looking for works as the fruit of faith, the judgment testifies to the reality of salvation. The judgment according to works in relation to justification by faith gives expression to the wholeness and unity of salvation seen in the relation between Christ as Saviour and Christ as Lord, between the gift of God and the claim of God, between freedom from sin's authority and warfare against sin's appeal.

When one sees the nature of the connection existing between these relations, it can be said of the judgment as related to justification that it does not stand in the relation of antithesis or contradiction, but of complementarity and fulfillment. To reject the judgment according to works, then, would be to reject the totality of God's redemptive intention. The Christ of the cross never leaves a person where He found him. The Christ of the cross always says to the one He justifies, "Take up the cross, and follow me." The judgment tests and witnesses to this reality.

Preadvent Judgment

Seventh-day Adventists believe the Bible teaches a process of judgment that takes place prior to the second advent of Christ. Traditionally this judgment has been known as the investigative judgment. What is the significance of this preadvent judgment? Does it stand in conflict with the scriptural teaching on justification by faith and judgment according to works? Does it take away the assurance of salvation that justification by faith brings? Critics of Adventism have said Yes. At times inadequate presentations of the investigative judgment may have suggested that such a "yes" was warranted.

It is my contention, however, that the investigative judgment, rightly understood, is in harmony with justification by faith and judgment according to works. It encompasses within itself the ingredients of these two fundamental teachings.

A correct understanding of the investigative judgment will not view it as an independent event, something apart from the flow of salvation history, for that would make it another track of salvation. Such would be a grievous error. Rather, the investigative judgment can be understood properly only when it is seen in relation to the final judgment on the one hand and, on the other hand, Christ's judgment on sin at the cross leading to His justification of the sinner by faith.

Some have wished to say that in Ellen White's depiction of the investigative judgment in the book *The Great Controversy* (pp. 479–91) she misused the Bible, for she applies texts about the final judgment to the investigative judgment. Another and better interpretation is possible. Ellen White uses final judgment texts because in her thought and the thought of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, the investigative judgment is an integral part of the final judgment.

Two major considerations support this view. First, pioneer Seventh-day Adventists, including Ellen White, foresaw Christ's second advent as very soon. The ending of the investigative judgment and the appearance of the Saviour with His reward were on the horizon. In such a setting it was impossible to separate the investigative judgment, with its divine recompense, which would take place at the coming of Christ. In fact, the period of the investigative judgment was a time of special preparation to meet Christ and in peace pass the execution of His just decision. They believed in the most intimate continuity between the opening of the books and the rendering of the decision in the preadvent judgment and the execution of the decision, for good or ill, at the Advent judgment. It was all part of one symphony of the judgment, and the finale soon would be reached.

In the second place, the investigative judgment and the final judgment deal with a basic question common to both: Is the believer's life one of continuing faith, repentance, confession, and obedient service in love? These terms summarize the many expressions Ellen White uses in her *Great Controversy* chapter on the investigative judgment to describe what God expects in the life of those who have claimed His justification. They are the same in essence as those in which Scripture represents the divine Judge as expecting of His people in the final judgment. The two judgments are really one, but the one judgment has two phases.

But there is one other element considered in the investigative judgment—a primary element—and it corresponds to the reality of God's manifestation of His righteousness at the cross (Rom 3:21, 24–25) and His justification of the sinner by faith (Rom 3:22, 25–26).

According to Adventist thought, when the repentant sinner comes to Christ and confesses his faith in the Saviour's atoning sacrifice, pardon is registered next to his name in the heavenly books. When the books are opened in the judgment this record of forgiveness can be seen. Plainly, the investigative judgment does not deal merely with the sins of mankind but with the forgiveness of Christ.

Consequently, when the whole package is put together, and justification by faith and future judgment according to works are seen as the content of the investigative judgment, it can be stated that there are two questions this judgment answers. First, has the sinner sought and received Christ's forgiveness of his sins? Second, has this forgiveness brought forth good fruit in his life?

To expand the combined content and effect of these two questions so fundamentally pertinent to the investigative judgment, the following questions may be asked in the form of direct address, detailing the concerns of this judgment toward believers. Has Christ been both your Saviour and your Lord? What have you done with the cross of Christ and the grace revealed therein? Have you affirmed the cross for the whole of your existence or for only part of it? When the crucified Christ came to you with His gift and claim, did you submit to Him and follow Him, taking up your cross, or did you go your own way—the same way you went before you met Him? Have you let your thoughts and actions be taken captive to Christ? Or have you—God forbid—separated yourself from His grace by denying with your life what you have professed with your freedom from the condemnation of God's law led you to a new faithfulness to that law in the strength of Christ's grace? Have Christ's love and forgiveness to you become the basis of your forgiveness and love to others?

Only when the answer to such questions is a fundamental Yes can the final revelation of God's forgiveness and mercy be extended to believers, in accordance with Christ's words: "Forgive us our debts [in the future judgment] as we also have forgiven our debtors [in this world]" (Matt 6:12).

If such an approach of God to man in the investigative judgment takes away assurance of salvation, as some have alleged, then the same must be true of the final judgment as well. One can hardly claim to hold to the biblical view of the final judgment and then raise objection to the appearance of the same issues in the investigative judgment. One cannot maintain fairly that God's claim is *not* contrary to the believer's assurance in the final judgment, but that it is contrary to the believer's assurance in the investigative judgment. The only way this could be done is by viewing the final judgment in terms of a once-saved-always-saved theology. Such a theology and the automatic assurance it brings obviously would be contrary to the investigative judgment and the assurance by continual adherence to Christ.

However, the biblical passages on judgment, such as those adduced in this article, make it abundantly evident that the once-saved-always-saved theology is indefensible. If this is so, the issue of the true nature of assurance arises with full force for everyone who confesses that believers "must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive good or evil, according to what he has done in the body" (2 Cor 5:10).

If we say that the investigative judgment's call to perfection takes away the believer's assurance, then it must be replied that Scripture makes the same call. First Thessalonians 3:13 and 5:23 are sufficient to illustrate the point. But believers can rejoice that no matter how great the stringency of God's appeal, "He who calls you is faithful, and he will do it" (1 Thess 5:24). And, believers can "give thanks to the Lord, for he is good; for his steadfast love endures forever" (Ps 106:1).

The relationship of the investigative judgment to justification and the final judgment may be represented in its totality in this way. On the one hand, the investigative judgment ratifies and confirms the justification procured by Christ at the cross and received by believers through faith. On the other hand, the investigative judgment inaugurates the final judgment that is consummated when Christ returns the second time and again after the millennium. The initial phase of the final judgment exposes the true relation of believers to Christ, and the closing phase rewards belivers in accordance with the true nature of their service for Christ.

Purpose of Investigative Judgment

When Seventh-day Adventists speak of an investigative judgment, it should not be understood as meaning that God seeks information He does not have. After all, God is the Author of the books which His judgment opens. The books stand not for new knowledge that God has yet to acquire but for old knowledge that God now will expose. So the purpose of the investigative judgment on God's part is not to discover reality but to unmask it, not to find out the truth but to reveal it.

As a result of this process of exposure and disclosure, the redeemed cry:

Great and wonderful are thy deeds,
O Lord God the Almighty!
Just and true are thy ways
O King of the ages!
Who shall not fear and glorify thy name, O Lord?
For thou alone art holy.
All nations shall come and worship thee,
for thy judgments have been revealed (Rev 15:3-4).

As Paul writes, "O the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways! 'For who has known the mind of the Lord, or who has been his counselor?' 'Or who has given a gift to him that he might be repaid?' For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be glory for ever. Amen" (Rom 11:33-36).

Judgment in the Writings of John

It will be helpful now to turn to certain aspects of the apostle John's teaching on the judgment. His teaching has been used at times to make of little or no effect the general NT teaching on the judgment to come and the issues involved in that judgment. So what will be said here will be relevant both to the preadvent and Advent phases of the final judgment.

The fact is, according to John, that the cross is God's judgment on sin (John 12:31–33; 16:11) and that the judgment of the believer, as well as the unbeliever, is in the past. This depends upon acceptance or rejection of the light that Christ brings (John 3:18–21)—and these truths should be gratefully acknowledged. They contribute significantly to the overall NT understanding of judgment.

However, these Johannine truths must not be allowed to override what Paul and the rest of the NT clearly teach, that is, that a day of judgment for the world is yet coming, and even believers will be called to account before the King. In other words, the pastness of the judgment in John should not be utilized to negate the futurity of the judgment elsewhere.

However, to speak this way is to speak too simply, for it is not the case that the judgment in John is only past and the judgment elsewhere is only future. Paul, for instance, teaches a past judgment as well as a future one. This is explicitly taught in Romans 8:3, where he says that God sent His Son and "condemned sin in the flesh." It also is the obvious implication of justification by faith. Justification by faith means that the verdict of the future judgment has moved into the present, initiating Christian existence (but without negating the future judgment according to works, as we saw earlier in our studies).

John, on the other hand, can speak of a future judgment as well as a present. According to John 12:43, "He who rejects me and does not receive my sayings has a judge; the word that I have spoken will be his judge on the last day." John 5:29 speaks of those who will be raised "to the resurrection of judgment." In 1 John 4:17 we read about Christian "confidence for the day of judgment." We see that both Paul and John have an "already/not yet" theology. But in Paul's teaching the "not yet" of the judgment involves believers, and it can lead to a negative result if Christ has not been honored in the body. How is it with John? Do believers come into the future judgment, and especially one with the possibility of a negative result?

Some have answered this question with an emphatic No, basing their answer upon John 5:24 where Jesus says, "Truly, truly, I say to you, he who hears my word and believes him who sent me, has eternal life; he does not come into judgment, but has passed from death to life." While this text contains the wonderful news of an already-accomplished movement from death to eternal life on the part of those who hear and believe Jesus' word, several considerations show that it would be wrong to use this text to teach that John thought believers have no relation to a future judgment.

1. The text does not say necessarily that believers do not come into judgment in any sense. The Greek noun for judgment here sometimes bears the meaning "condemnation" in John (John 3:19; 5:29; see the same use of the Greek verb in 3:17–18; cf. Acts 13:27; Rom 14:22; and 2 Thess 2:12).

Since judgment is the opposite of eternal life in John 5:24, the text must be saying that the believer does not come into a judgment of condemnation, meaning a judgment which issues in condemnation. How does the believer avoid such a judgment? This brings up the second point.

2. What makes it possible for the believer to escape a judgment of condemnation and come into possession of eternal life is that he hears and believes Jesus' word. The Greek words for hearing and believing are in the present tense, hence they refer to a continuous action and not a mere onetime hearing or believing.

It is by continually hearing and believing that one continually has eternal life and avoids the judgment of condemnation that comes upon those who have done evil (John 5:29). Deny the one reality (hearing and believing), and one necessarily denies the other (having eternal life and avoiding condemnation). After all, does not John 3:18 teach that he who believes in Christ is not condemned, but he who does not believe is condemned already? The presence of "already" in the second half of this verse does not restrict the meaning of this verse to the past. If a person stops believing—and John nowhere denies its possibility—the "already" becomes operative. John 3:36 is applicable: "He who believes in the Son has eternal life; he who does not obey [believe in] the Son shall not see life." Unless John operates with a once-saved-always-saved mentality, cessation of belief must mean cessation of life. We see that eternal life is contingent upon continual belief.

When John 5:24 uses the Greek perfect tense to picture the transfer from death to life, this does not mean the text is talking about an irrevocable transfer that even unbelief could not alter. The believer, as a result of transfer, is in a state of life (the significance of the perfect tense of the Greek verb) only as long as he keeps on hearing and believing. The text indeed talks about permanence, but not a permanence separated from the permanence of faith.

In like manner, the fact that in John 10:28-29 Christ's sheep shall never perish and no one shall snatch them from Christ's or the Father's hand is contingent upon their hearing the Shepherd's voice and following Him. Nothing suggests that this hearing and following are by necessity (preparing the way for the concept of the necessity or automatic permanency of eternal life) rather than by choice.

We Are to Abide in Christ

3. Other texts in John strongly support the fact that believers can be adversely judged. John 15 urges believers to abide in Christ and bear fruit. The branch that bears no fruit, the Father "takes away" (vs. 2). Or in more dramatic form, "If a man does not abide in me, he is cast forth as a branch and withers; and the branches are gathered, thrown into the fire and burned" (vs. 6).

- 4. In 1 John we find several tests for the presence of life:
 - a. Believing in and confessing Christ (1 John 2:22; 4:2-3, 15; 5:9-13).
 - b. Abiding in Christ (1 John 2:24-25, 28).
 - c. Keeping God's commandments (1 John 2:3-5, 17; 3:21-24; 4:21; 5:2-3).
 - d. Walking as Christ walked (1 John 2:7).
 - e. Doing the right and avoiding sin (1 John 2:29; 3:6–7, 10).
 - f. Loving one another (1 John 2:7–11; 3:11–17; 4:7–8, 11, 16–17, 20–21; 5:2–3).
 - g. Not loving the world (1 John 2:15–16).

These are tests of life because, according to John, by their presence or absence it is shown that a person has or does not have life. Notice, for example, 1 John 3:14 (which may be compared with John 5:24): "We know that we have passed out of death unto life, because we love the brethren. *He who does not love abides in death.*" According to 1 John 4:16–17, "he who abides in love abides in God," hence has "confidence for the day of judgment." The implication seems obvious: He who does not abide in love can have no confidence for the day of judgment.

In light of the larger patterns of Johannine thought, as well as the more immediate exegetical particulars of John 5:24, we cannot conclude that for John there is no relationship of the believer to the future judgment. This conclusion is strengthened when one makes inquiry of John 5:28–29, a passage that is related intimately to John 5:24. Are those who have done good here, hence are resurrected to eternal life, those who have only believed—doing good being *equivalent* to believing in John 5:24? Or are these they who have done good *in consequence of* believing, the inference being that if faith has not issued in good works, there is only a resurrection to judgment (condemnation)? Surely the second option is best. More than likely the kind of doing of good spoken of in John 5:29 refers, at least in part to loving other people as in 1 John 3:14, a text which, like John 5:24, speaks of passing from death to life.

Conclusions

The main considerations of this study now have been presented. We need to be clear: Justification and assurance of salvation are not achieved by human works or by faith plus human works. Justification and assurance come only by the all-sufficient work of Jesus Christ as Saviour.

But Christ our Saviour also is our Lord. Only by beholding Him and seeing the inseparable connection between His saviorhood and lordship can we explain rightly the relationship between justification and judgment, faith and works. As Christ cannot be divided, so these realities that relate to Him cannot be separated from each other. Through the power of the Spirit faith always leads to fruit in the lives of the justified.

In His dual office as Saviour and Lord, Christ judged sin at the cross, justifies the sinner by faith, and judges the justified by works. The cross is the means by which justification is effected; faith is the means by which justification is accepted; and good works are the means by which justification is manifested. Works of righteousness testify to the reality and vitality of justification. Their absence indicates a broken relation with Jesus.

As Saviour, Christ obeyed God for our sake; as Lord, He summons us to obey God for His sake. As Saviour, Christ gave His life for us; as Lord, He bids us live for Him.

The more deeply one understands the riches of Christ's grace, the more He hears Christ's call to obedience. The believer heeds the call, however, not as stern obligation but as heartfelt appreciation. In the context of Christ's infinite love, obligation ceases to be hard duty and becomes the easy yoke of Christ. The apostle Paul captured the beautiful balance in God's salvation when he said:

"I am the least of the apostles, unfit to be called an apostle.... But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace toward me was not in vain. On the contrary, I worked harder than any of them, though it was not I, but the grace of God which was with me" (1 Cor 15:9-10).

As a result of your receiving the gift of God's justifying grace, Paul's words apply to you: "It is my prayer that your love may abound more and more, with knowledge and all discernment, so that you may approve what is excellent, and may be pure and blameless for the day of Christ, filled with the fruits of righteousness which come through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God" (Phil 1:9-11).

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